

The Town of Bellefonte



Comprehensive Plan

Draft

12/1/05

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TOWN, COUNTY, AND STATE OFFICIALS

TOWN OF BELLEFONTE

President and Commission	David Wishowsky, President Scott McKenzie, Secretary Scott Clouthier, Commissioner Kathy MacDonough, Commissioner Terry Thompson, Commissioner
Treasurer, Assessor, & Tax Collector	Curt A. Nass, Treasurer
Town Solicitor	David Facciolo
Planning Commission	Terry Thompson, Chairperson Joan Darvish-Rouhani, Secretary Scott Clouthier, Town Commissioner Frank Holodick, Resident/Business Owner Theresa Holodick, Bellefonte Resident Kathy MacDonough, Town Commissioner Curt Nass, Town Treasurer James Paradise, Bellefonte Resident Andrew Ritchie, Bellefonte Resident
Board of Adjustments	David Wishowsky, Chairperson Kathy MacDonough, Town Commissioner David Facciolo, Town Solicitor
Building Inspector	Joesph Finocchiaro
Plumbing Inspector	Steve Russo
Charter/Ordinance Committee	Terry Thompson, Chairperson Scott Clouthier, Town Commissioner John Esch, Bellefonte Resident Scott MacKenzie, Town Commissioner
Town Facilities Committee	Scott MacKenzie, Chairperson Michael McGrath, Bellefonte Resident Richard Mulhearn, Bellefonte Resident Curt Nass, Town Treasurer

TOWN OF BELLEFONTE (CONT.)

Town Services Committee	Scott Clouthier, Chairperson Bruce Dunlap, Bellefonte Resident Kathy MacDonough, Town Commissioner
Community Activities Committee	Kathy MacDonough, Chairperson Scott Clouthier, Town Commissioner Michael McGrath, Bellefonte Resident Richard Mulhearn, Bellefonte Resident
Town & Fire Dept Task Force	Scott MacKenzie, Town Commission Representative Cindy Anker, Bellefonte Resident Richard Mulhearn, Bellefonte Resident

NEW CASTLE COUNTY

County Executive	Chris Coons
County Council	Paul G. Clark, President John J. Cartier, 8 th District
Department of Land Use	Charles Baker, General Manager

STATE OF DELAWARE

Governor	The Honorable Ruth Ann Minner
Senate	The Honorable Harris B. McDowell, 1 st District
House of Representatives	The Honorable Diana M. McWilliams, 6 th District
Office of State Planning	Constance S. Holland, AICP, Director Herb Inden, Principal Planner

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This plan was prepared by the Town of Bellefonte Planning Commission:

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Alan Matas, Bellefonte Resident
John Tyrawski, Bellefonte Resident
Herb Inden, Office of State Planning Coordination

The Planning Commission would like to acknowledge the following businesses for their support with our public workshops:

Bellefonte Café
804 Brandywine Blvd
Bellefonte, DE

Sweets to You by Ginger
913 Brandywine Blvd
Bellefonte, DE

Dunkin Donuts
701 Philadelphia Pike
Wilmington, DE

Lamberti's Cucina
514 Philadelphia Pike
Wilmington, DE

Wawa
Philadelphia Pike & Parkway Ave
Wilmington, DE

INTRODUCTION

This Comprehensive Plan serves as an official statement about the future of the Town of Bellefonte. First and foremost, the plan is a unified advisory document for the Town Commission and the Planning Commission on land use and growth issues. The town initiated development of the Plan in order to better manage land use matters, maintain town character, to update land use regulations, and to better plan for the future. It should be used to guide future development decisions, re-zonings, annexations, and capital improvements throughout the town. The Town will use the plan as the basis to revise its zoning code and zoning map.

The plan is also an informational document for the public. Citizens, business people, and government officials can turn to the plan to learn more about Bellefonte, and its policies for future land use decisions. Potential new residents can use the documents as an informational resource about the town, its characteristics and facilities. This document contains the most current information available on population, transportation, housing, employment and the environment.

Lastly, the Bellefonte Comprehensive Plan is a legal document. The Delaware Code specifies that “. . . any incorporated municipality under this chapter shall prepare a comprehensive plan for the city or town or portions thereof as the commission deems appropriate.” The code further specifies that, “after a comprehensive plan or portion thereof has been adopted by the municipality in accordance with this chapter, the comprehensive plan shall have the force of law and no development shall be permitted except as consistent with the plan.” (§ 702, Title 22, Delaware Code)

THE AUTHORITY TO PLAN

Delaware law (§ 702, Title 22, Delaware Code) requires that municipalities engage in comprehensive planning activities for the purpose of encouraging “the most appropriate uses of the physical and fiscal resources of the municipality and the coordination of municipal growth, development, and infrastructure investment actions with those of other municipalities, counties and the State....” This plan was written to comply with the requirements of a municipal development strategy as described in the Delaware Code for towns with population of 2000 or fewer.

The municipal comprehensive plan for small communities with fewer than 2000 people (such as Bellefonte) is to be a “document in text and maps, containing, at a minimum, a municipal development strategy setting forth the jurisdiction’s position on population and housing growth within the jurisdiction, expansion of its boundaries, development of adjacent areas, redevelopment potential, community character, and the general uses of land within the community, and critical community development and infrastructure issues.” In addition, the town’s comprehensive planning process must demonstrate coordination with other municipalities, the county, and the state during plan preparation. (§ 702, Title 22, Delaware Code)

State law requires that planning be an ongoing process and that municipalities identify future planning activities. This document is Bellefonte’s Municipal Comprehensive Development Plan as required by state law. It is intended to cover a ten-year planning period and be reviewed at least every five years. (§ 702, Title 22, Delaware Code)

COMMUNITY PROFILE

OVERVIEW

The Town of Bellefonte is a small located in northern New Castle County Delaware and has an early history as a working class suburb of the City. Residential lots are relatively small and nearly all lots have been built upon. The majority of the homes were built between 1940 and 1960. About half of Bellefonte's homes are cottage/cape cods, single family detached dwellings mostly clad with brick and/or siding. There are a few apartments surrounding Brandywine Boulevard which is Bellefonte's Central Business District. In general, architecture in Bellefonte is simple, without extensive detailing. One can find a few homes that are a bit ornate.

Bellefonte's main street is Brandywine Boulevard, which runs through the center of town. The street is accessible by foot to most residents and is also the primary route for public transportation. Most of the streets follow a grid pattern which is easy and convenient to navigate. There are a few tree lined streets and a limited number of sidewalks.

There are no industrial uses in Bellefonte and commerce is limited to Brandywine Boulevard between Maple Ave and Bellefonte Ave and one side of Philadelphia Pike between Bellefonte Ave and School House Lane. The Brandywine Ave business district (central business district) consists of several resale and other unique shops, two restaurants, laundromat, bakery, barbershop, upholstery shop, plumbing company, church, and engineering company along with several apartments, single family homes, and the Brandywine Hundred Fire Company No. 1. Some of the businesses on Brandywine Boulevard are located in what were once homes. Parking in this business district is primarily on the street and in a small public parking lot. The Philadelphia Pike business district contains a variety of businesses including two gas stations, pizza/sub shop, tattoo parlor, nail salon, electrician, van/car rental company, and others. Each of the businesses has a small private or shared parking lot for their patrons.

The Town Hall is located at 901A Rosedale Avenue, one block from Brandywine Boulevard at the intersection of Marion & Rosedale Avenues. The Town Hall building is a converted church, one of the more historic structures in the town. Adjacent to Town Hall is the Town Park which is primarily used by the daycare that occupies the old Sunday school portion of the Town Hall building.

The combination of the architecture of the houses and buildings, the unique businesses on Brandywine Blvd, the quaintness of the Town, and the friendly people give Bellefonte its character, setting it apart from most other areas in the County. This character makes Bellefonte a desirable place to live and is important factor in maintaining the Town's identity.

Bellefonte a "Hot spot for first-time buyers" – Out & About, April 2003
"One of Delaware's best places to live" – Delaware Today, March 2003
"Hip and cool..." – Spark Magazine, The News Journal, May 2004

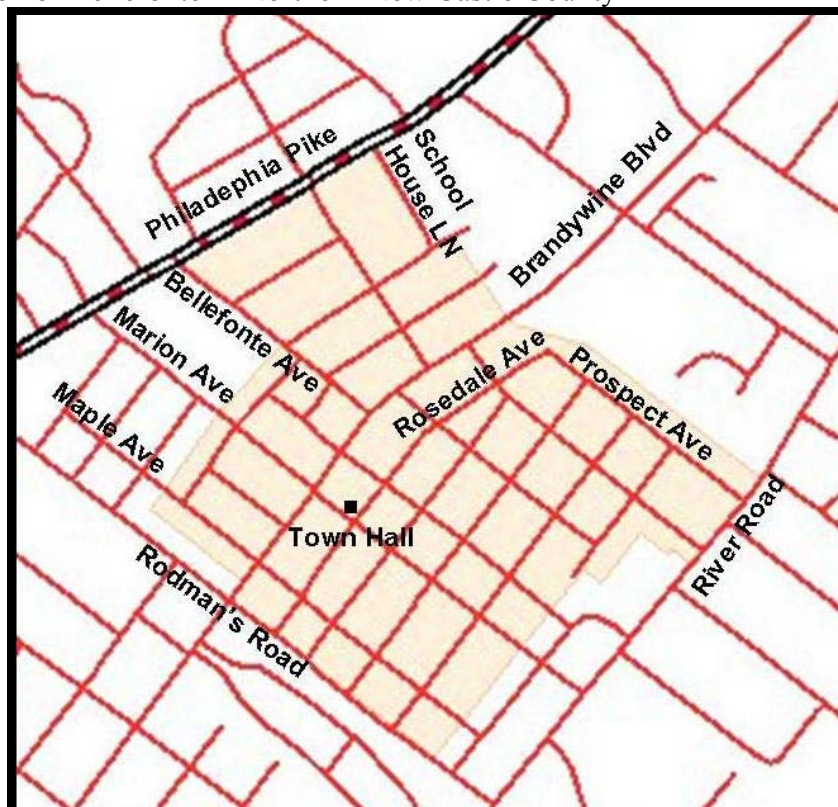
LOCATION

The Town of Bellefonte is located in northern Delaware, two miles northeast of the City of Wilmington in New Castle County.

Map 1: Location of Bellefonte in the State of Delaware



Map 2: Location of Bellefonte in Northern New Castle County



HISTORY OF THE TOWN

Located about one half-mile inland from the Delaware River, about equidistant from the much older urban centers of Wilmington and Claymont, the area now known as Bellefonte comprised mainly fields and estate lands from the period of exploration and settlement until the early 20th Century.

The first European settlers in this area were from Sweden; they began to construct mills on the nearby Shellpot Creek in the mid-1600's, and later purchased tracts of land from the native Americans. Sovereignty over the region soon passed from the Swedes to the Dutch to the English; but after resurvey the Swedes' ownership of the lands was confirmed in 1688. The northeast boundary of Henry Toarson's (Tussey) tract coincided with the present day Marion Avenue.

The King's Highway (now Philadelphia Pike or Route 13) served as the main road from Wilmington to Philadelphia from well before the Revolutionary War. In 1781 the troops of Washington and Rochambeau marched down it en route to the Battle of Yorktown. Structures still in existence from that time include the Penny, Tussey House, and Weldin houses. In 1813, the road was improved and designated as the Philadelphia Turnpike, with tolls to be paid at Penny Hill.

Over the next several decades, the area remained as farms and open land. Landowners included the Weldin, Guest, Duncan, Beeson, Clark and Lenderman families. Transportation, housing, and industry clustered around the Philadelphia Pike and the railroad tracks and the Delaware River.

Two homes, 715 Grandview and 1205 Melrose, are probably the earliest structures in present-day Bellefonte still extant, probably dating from around the Civil War. Available information shows that the next houses erected were clustered around the 1100 and 1200 blocks of Brandywine Boulevard and Rosedale Avenue.

A turning point came in the 1890's, when planners for a new trolley line deemed the Philadelphia Pike too steep for the trolley's tracks. Instead, the line was routed up Hillcrest Avenue to the street now known as Brandywine Boulevard. In the 1910 census, this road was referred to as "Montrose on Trolley." A Montrose Improvement Association was formed and obtained cinders to pave the streets.

Bellefonte received its incorporation as a town from the State of Delaware on March 9, 1915. At that time, there were about a dozen houses and farms in the area. Land development proceeded as the town was subdivided into lots of about 20' x 100' in the three sections still known as Montrose, Montrose Terrace, and Montrose Terrace Addition. Toward the northwest, the subdivisions of Bellefonte Heights and Villa Monterey were also established.

Other contemporaneous activity of note surrounding the new Town of Bellefonte included the erection of the Marcus Hook Rear Range Light, a couple of blocks south. A temporary structure was illuminated at the site in 1915. The permanent concrete lighthouse was completed and became operational in 1920, and represents one of only a few square lighthouses in the U. S.

The Bellefonte Methodist Church was organized in early 1919, and the main building at Marion

and Rosedale dedicated in 1920 (a Sunday school wing was added in 1950). Around the same time, the Town Commissioners purchased several lots on Brandywine Boulevard and built a Community Hall, complete with meeting rooms and auditorium. By 1924, the Brandywine Hundred Fire Company had organized and applied for incorporation. They were the first fire company north of Wilmington, and the only company serving the entire area for several years.

By 1929 the Fire Company needed suitable quarters and a permanent home, and purchased the Community Hall property from the Town for \$5,000, with the understanding that Town meetings could continue to be held there.

There was a building boom in Bellefonte in the '20s. It was still considered "the country" and some moved in for the fresh air. One family received parcels of land in exchange for a debt at their store. Personal automobiles gained popularity, and plumbing moved indoors. Electricity and water infrastructures were built. By the late '30s, the sale of bonds and the WPA facilitated the installation of sidewalks and sanitary sewers. In an understatement, a newspaper article of the time explained construction delays with the simple phrase: "rock was encountered."

In 1932, the Mount Pleasant School was constructed on Duncan Road, and housed grades one through nine. Fifteen years later, the board petitioned to expand to grade twelve. By 1958 a separate high school was opened on Washington Street extension.

The original St. Helena's Roman Catholic Church was built along Bellefonte Avenue in 1936, with the larger present church building added in 1954. Bellefonte Avenue had been the main artery into Town, and Marion Avenue did not go through until around 1940.

As private cars and motorized buses became more prevalent, the trolley line was converted to "trackless" trolley and finally became a bus line in the 1950's.

The congregation of the Bellefonte Methodist Church decided to relocate, and offered their building up for sale. In 1971 the Town Commissioners purchased the building to use as a Town Hall.

DEMOGRAPHICS, FUTURE POPULATION, AND HOUSING GROWTH

Data on population, demography, housing and economic conditions in Bellefonte are outlined in the following section, along with appropriate comparisons to New Castle County and the State of Delaware.

The United States Census has been the primary data source, with information taken from Summary File 1 (SF-1) and Summary File 3 (SF-3). SF-1 is a direct information count considered to be very reliable, while SF-3 is an estimation based on sample data, which has been known to lose accuracy with towns of small populations.

Population and Housing

The U.S. Census is intended to be a count of all persons, though errors, omissions, and overcounts undoubtedly occur. While small errors have minimal effect on large populations, the same inaccuracies significantly impact small populations, such as Bellefonte, creating questions regarding the data's validity.

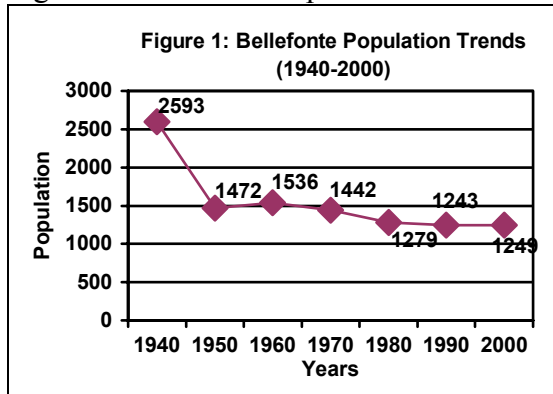
Additionally, factors ranging from government policies to economic conditions can alter trends and eventually affect population projections. However, the statistics are included for the value gained by comparing them to State and County level data to illustrate demographic and population trends.

A review of information collected through the US Census indicates that from 1940 to 2000, while the population in Delaware and New Castle County has steadily increased, the population in Bellefonte has fluctuated with an overall decrease in population. According to the US Census, the town's population peaked in 1940 at 2,593 persons. This population figure is probably an aberration as the census indicates that there were only 251 structures built prior to 1940. The majority of the houses in the Town were built from 1940 to 1959 nearly doubling the total number of structures in the Town.

The 1990 Census reported 1,243 people living in Bellefonte and the 2000 Census data shows Bellefonte's population increased by 6 individuals or 0.5%. During the same time frame Kent County's population grew from 111,000 to 126,697, an increase of 14%. Additionally, the State's population grew by 18% from 666,000 in 1990 to 783,000 in 2000. Bellefonte's total population in 2000 was 1,249 individuals, of which 48% were male and 52% were female.

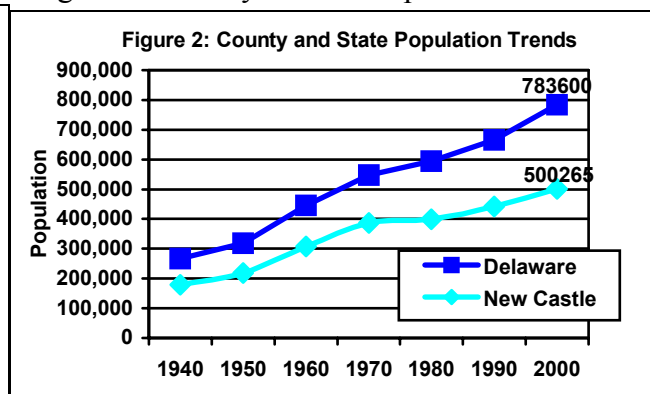
The following charts show the population trends for Bellefonte, New Castle County, and the State. Figure 1 shows the population for Bellefonte from 1940 to 2000. Figure 2 shows the population trends for New Castle County and the State of Delaware during the same time period.

Figure 1: Bellefonte Population Trend



Source: U.S. Census, 1940 – 2000.

Figure 2: County & State Population Trends



Source: US Census 1940 – 2000.

Population Projections

Population projections for areas as small as the Town of Bellefonte are very valuable in planning for future growth, but are extremely difficult to calculate with a significant degree of accuracy. The following projections have been prepared using growth figures from the Delaware Population Consortium's estimates for population growth in New Castle County, under the assumption that Bellefonte will grow at a rate similar to New Castle County. The housing projections were derived from the previously mentioned growth rate and the average household size of 2.33 in Bellefonte in the year 2000. The results of these projections appear in Table 1 and are summarized below.

Table 1: Future Population and Housing Projections

Population Projection						
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
New Castle County	524,815	547,356	567,193	583,980	597,348	606,338
Bellefonte	1305	1361	1410	1452	1485	1507
Housing Projection						
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Bellefonte	560	584	605	623	637	647

Sources: Delaware Population Consortium Annual Population Projections, 2004. US Census 2000, SF-1.

These projections show Bellefonte's population increasing to 1410 by the year 2015 and to 1507 by the year 2030. The housing projection from this study indicates an additional 45 houses by 2015 and a total of 87 by 2030. With the current trend of younger homebuyers with children or planning to have children purchasing the homes of our older single or married residents without children at home, the population could grow as shown in the projection. However, this increase in population is unlikely to increase the number of houses in Bellefonte as nearly every lot is built upon. The only way to increase the number of housing units to the figures stated in these projections is to replace single family housing with duplexes or apartments or annex surrounding properties. Since annexation is not a major objective of the Town, the Planning Commission expects the housing units remain relatively flat beyond 2005.

Racial Composition

In 1990, Bellefonte was very homogeneous with a 98.3% white population, contrasting New Castle County and the State of Delaware who had populations of 80.4% white and 80% white respectively, as seen in Table 2.

Census 2000 data indicates that Bellefonte became slightly more diverse during the 1990's as the white population as a percentage of the total population decreased from 98.3% in 1990 to 95.9% in 2000, while the black population rose from 0.6% in 1990 to 2.4% in the year 2000. Bellefonte is still more homogeneous than New Castle County and the State of Delaware who are also becoming more diverse, as seen in Table 2.

The following table lists the population by racial composition for Bellefonte, New Castle County and Delaware.

Table 2: Racial Composition of Bellefonte, New Castle County and Delaware

Race	Bellefonte		New Castle County		Delaware	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
White	98.3%	95.9%	80.4%	73.1%	80.0%	75.0%
Black	0.6%	2.4%	16.4%	20.2%	17.0%	19.0%
Other	1.1%	1.7%	3.2%	6.7%	3.0%	6.0%

Source: 1990 & 2000 U.S. Census; SF-1.

Age Profile

Bellefonte has an age distribution of its population, as shown in Table 3, equivalent to New Castle County and the State of Delaware.

Table 3: Age Profiles for Bellefonte, New Castle County, and Delaware, Census 2000

Age	Town of Bellefonte		New Castle County		State of Delaware	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<5	77	6.2%	33,384	6.7%	51,531	6.6%
5-9	84	6.7%	36,150	7.2%	55,813	7.1%
10-14	87	7.0%	34,961	7.0%	55,274	7.1%
15-19	62	5.0%	36,309	7.3%	55,632	7.1%
20-24	46	3.7%	35,499	7.1%	51,665	6.6%
25-34	191	15.3%	73,869	14.8%	108,840	13.9%
35-44	246	19.7%	83,616	16.7%	127,601	16.3%
45-54	177	14.2%	66,882	13.4%	103,999	13.3%
55-59	50	4.0%	23,739	4.7%	39,320	5.0%
60-64	36	2.9%	17,953	3.6%	32,199	4.1%
65-74	83	6.6%	30,904	6.2%	56,415	7.2%
75-84	84	6.7%	20,556	4.1%	34,762	4.4%
85+	26	2.1%	6,443	1.0%	10,549	1.3%

Source: 2000 US Census; SF-1.

Educational Attainment

The average level of educational attainment for Bellefonte is similar to the State of Delaware but slightly lower than that of New Castle County as seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Educational Attainment for Bellefonte, New Castle County, and Delaware, 2000.

Jurisdiction	High school graduate or higher	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Bellefonte	84.9%	25.9%
New Castle County	85.5%	29.5%
State of Delaware	83%	25%

Source: 2000 Census, SF-3.

Housing Units

Table 5 compares changes in the number of dwelling units in Bellefonte, New Castle County, and the State of Delaware as recorded by the U.S. Census Bureau. While New Castle County and the State have seen consistent dwelling unit increases over the past few decades, Bellefonte has grown at a much slower rate. It should be remembered that the numbers in the table below are taken from Census SF-3 and might not be totally accurate.

Table 5: Dwelling Units in Bellefonte, New Castle County, and Delaware, 1970-2000

Year	Bellefonte	Change	New Castle County	Change	Delaware	Change
1970	528	***	120,683	***	180,233	***
1980	N/A	***	148,452	23%	230,301	28%
1990	523	***	173,560	17%	289,919	26%
2000	551	5.3%	199,520	15%	343,072	18%

Sources: US Census 1970 – 2000.

Type of Housing Stock

The following Table 6 and Table 7 summarize changes in the types of housing in Bellefonte, New Castle County, and the State.

Table 6: Composition of Housing in Bellefonte, New Castle County, and Delaware in 1990.

Housing Type	Bellefonte		New Castle County		State of Delaware	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single Family Detached	431	82.4%	89,831	52%	156,013	53.8%
Single family, Attached	6	1.1%	33,753	19%	40,161	13.8%
Multi –Family	80	15.3%	43,858	25%	56,679	19.5%
Mobile Homes	0	0%	4847	3%	34,944	12%
Other	6	1.1%	1271	1%	2122	0.7%
Total	523	100%	173,560	100%	289,919	100%

U.S. Census, 1990, SF-1.

Table 7: Composition of Housing Stock, Bellefonte, New Castle County, Delaware, 2000

Housing Type	Bellefonte		New Castle County		State of Delaware	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single Family Detached	466	85%	107,015	53.6%	191,688	56%
Single family, Attached	6	1%	39,609	19.8%	48,340	14%
Multi –Family	79	14%	47,818	23.9%	64,128	19%
Mobile Homes	0	0%	5,072	2.5%	38,281	11%
Other	0	0%	7	<0.01%	635	0.2%
Total	551	100%	199,521	100%	343,072	100%

U.S. Census, 2000, SF-3.

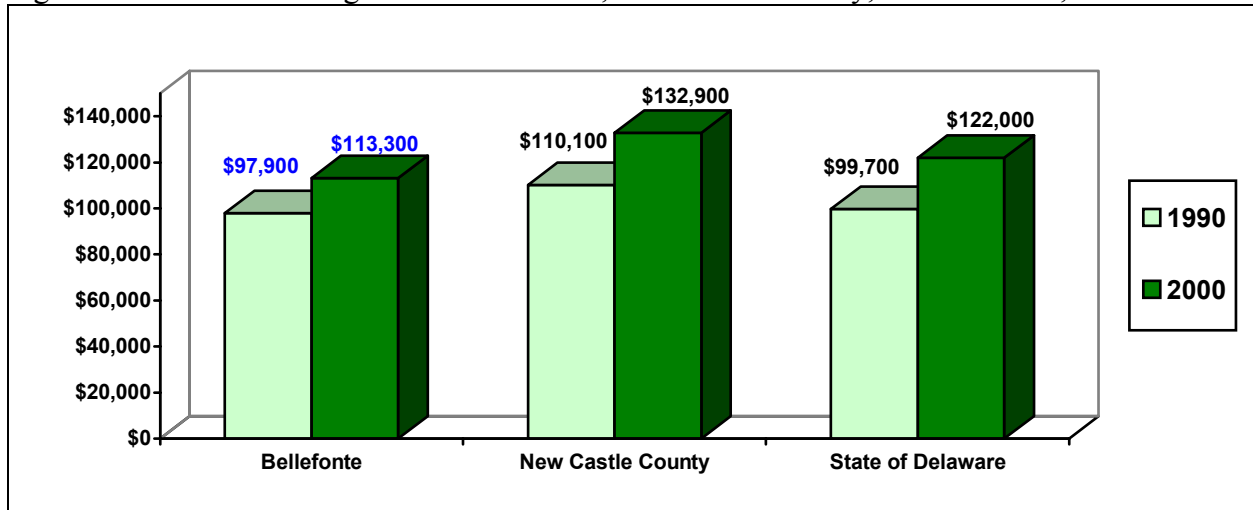
Age of Housing Stock

The median year homes were build in Bellefonte is 1942, substantially older than the median year homes were build in Delaware of 1973 and in New Castle County, 1968.

Housing Value

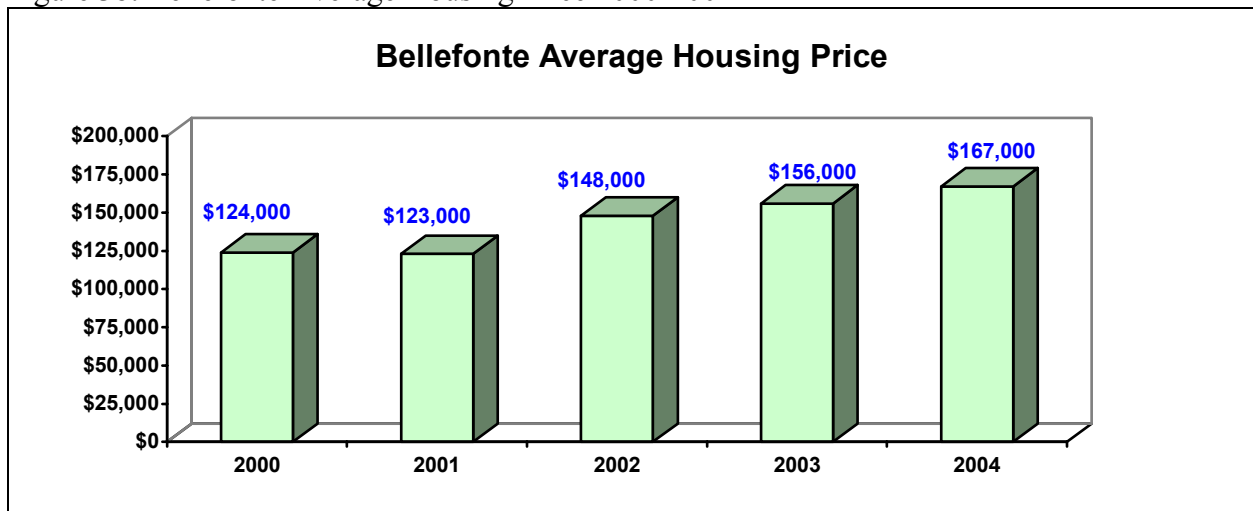
Figure 3a compares Bellefonte's 1990 and 2000 median housing value with housing values in New Castle County and the State of Delaware. Bellefonte experienced a 15.7% increase in housing values which is behind the 20.7% and 22.4% increases seen in New Castle County and the State, respectively. This difference can be attributed to Bellefonte being nearly built out causing a large disparity in number of new homes being built in the Town vs. the other entities. Figure 3b shows the average housing price in Bellefonte from 2000-2004.

Figure 3a: Median Housing Values-Bellefonte, New Castle County, and Delaware, 1990 & 2000



Source: 1990 and 2000 US Census; SF-3.

Figure 3b: Bellefonte Average Housing Price 2000-2004

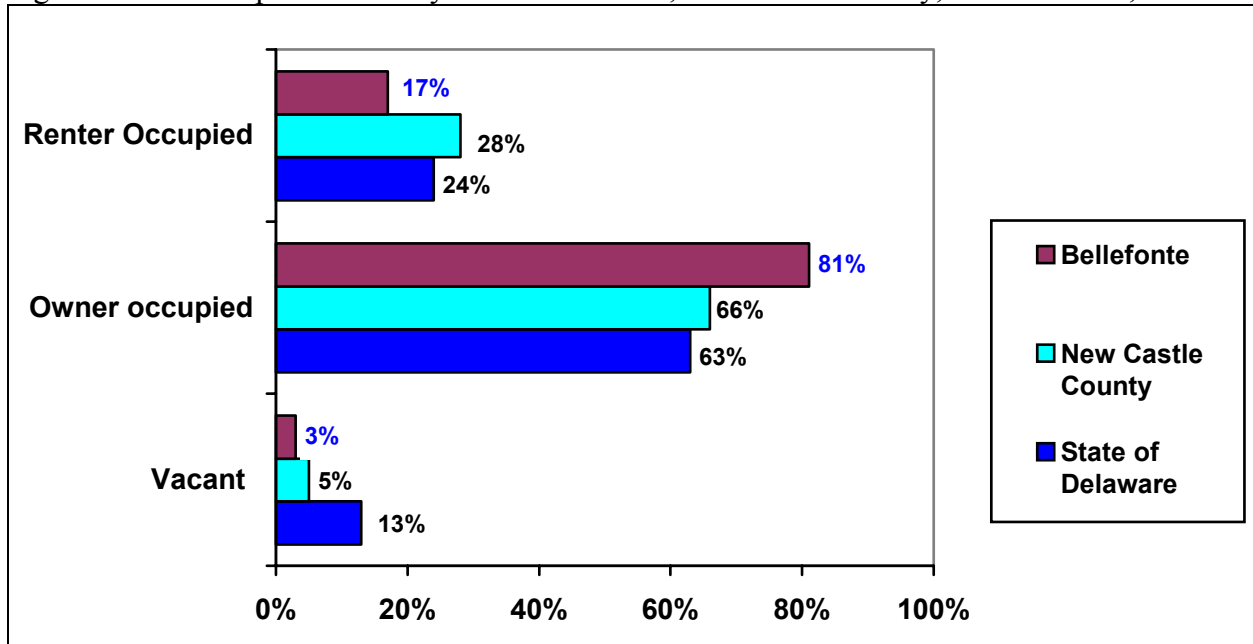


Source: Steven Sachs Appraisal Access (Delaware Today, March 2005)

Ownership and Vacancy

Figure 4 compares the proportion of vacant units, owner-occupied units, and renter occupied units found in Bellefonte, New Castle County, and the State. Bellefonte has a significantly higher percentage of owner occupied housing units versus the County and State.

Figure 4: Ownership and Vacancy Rates-Bellefonte, New Castle County, and Delaware, 2000



Source: US Census, 2000.

Economic Profile

Bellefonte has historically been an independent entity although there is no single employer in the Town that supports/constitutes an economic base. The majority of the residents are employed by surrounding industries making Bellefonte more of a bedroom community to Wilmington and the surrounding areas. However, Bellefonte has a number of small businesses located in its two business districts.

Bellefonte's main street which is Brandywine Boulevard, divides the town. The street is accessible by foot to all residents and serves as Bellefonte's Central Business District. This business district is comprised of small unique businesses that are a major contributor to the character of the Town. While businesses came and went in the past, the past couple of years have shown stability and even growth the past year with the addition of the barbershop and additional retail shops. Because of its uniqueness, this district is the backbone of Bellefonte's economic potential. Without these businesses, Bellefonte would be just another neighborhood in North Wilmington.

Table 8a: Brandywine Blvd Businesses (central business district)

Business Name	Address	Business Type	Full Time	Part Time
Richard J. Leach Upholtering	709 Brandywine Blvd	Service - Furniture Restoration	3	2
Saks Thrift Avenue	800 Brandywine Blvd	Retail - Consignment Boutique	2	1
HGS Hydroponic Garden & Supply	800 1/2 B Brandywine Blvd	Retail - Hydroponic Garden & Supply		
Eclectica	800 1/2 Brandywine Blvd	Retail - Gifts & Home Décor	1	1
Howard L. Robertson	801 Brandywine Blvd	Civil Engineers & Surveys	13	0
The Dragon Queen's Lair	803 Brandywine Blvd	Retail - Celtic Metaphysic Gifts	1	0
Belongings	803 Brandywine Blvd	Retail - Antiques & Collectibles	1	0
Leading Lady	803 Brandywine Blvd	Service - Beauty Salon		
Bellefonte Café	804 Brandywine Blvd	Food Service - Restaurant	1	0
Chen's Pizza	807 Brandywine Blvd	Food Service - Takeout Restaurant		
Boulevard Laundry	809 Brandywine Blvd	Service - Laundromat		
Brandywine Consignment	810 Brandywine Blvd	Retail - Women's Consignment	1	0
Michael's Bellefonte Barbershop	900 Brandywine Blvd	Service - Barbershop	4	1
Cinnamon Stix	901 Brandywine Blvd	Retail - Antiques & Collectibles		
Fairy Godmother's House	903 Brandywine Blvd	Retail - Resale & Consignment Children & Adults	1	2
Russo Bros. Inc.	912 Brandywine Blvd	Service - Plumbing & Heating	4	0
Sweets To You, By Ginger Inc	913 Brandywine Blvd	Food Service - Cakes/Bakery	10	6
Blueberry Hill Resale	1015 Brandywine Blvd	Retail - Antiques & Collectibles	1	0

Bellefonte also has another small business district along one side of Philadelphia Pike from Bellefonte Ave to School House Lane. Philadelphia Pike is in fact a large retail entity that stretches from Wilmington to Claymont and the Bellefonte section is only a small piece of that large entity. While these are also small businesses in this district, they benefit from being located on a major thoroughfare and from larger businesses neighboring the Town. This Bellefonte section of Philadelphia Pike has no separate identity from the rest of Philadelphia Pike; as a result, lacks the character of the Town. Since the Town only has one side of the street of a small section of Philadelphia Pike, any efforts to improve this district would need to in conjunction with New Castle County.

Table 8b: Philadelphia Pike Businesses

Business Name	Address	Business Type	Full Time	Part Time
Pennyhill Exxon	700 Philadelphia Pike	Service - Gas Service Station	3	0
Spallco Rentals	704 Philadelphia Pike	Service - Truck Rental		
Thawley Real Estate	706 Philadelphia Pike	Service - Real Estate	1	
Fire Protection Services	706 Philadelphia Pike	Service - Fire Protection		
WF Murphy, Jr	706 Philadelphia Pike			
Green Stone Engineering, LLC	706 Philadelphia Pike, Suite 1	Service - Water Resources & Civil Site Engineering	5	3
Les St. Clair, PhD David Wishowsky	706 Philadelphia Pike, Suite 5	Service - Counseling		
Les St. Clair, PhD Jon T. Hill	706 Philadelphia Pike, Suite 5a	Service - Astrology/Psychic		
LoRusso Tax & Accounting Service	706 Philadelphia Pike, Suite 6	Service - Accounting		
Walker Accounting & Tax PA	706 Philadelphia Pike, Suite 6	Service - Accounting		
Paragon Engineering Corporation	708 Philadelphia Pike	Service - Engineering		
Chieffo Electric Inc	718 Philadelphia Pike	Service - Electrical Service	16	0
All Ten Nails Salon	722 ½ Philadelphia Pike	Service - Nail Salon		1
Rita's Water Ice	722 Philadelphia Pike	Food Service - Takeout	3	0
Northside Tattoos	722 Philadelphia Pike	Service - Tattoos/Body Piercing		
Pizza Subline	722A Philadelphia Pike	Food Service - Takeout Restaurant	4	4
Bellefonte BP	724 Philadelphia Pike	Service - Gas/Convenience Store		
The Crystal Center	728-732 Philadelphia Pike	Service - Conference Center & Banquet Hall		

Table 9 shows the income data for the Town of Bellefonte compared to New Castle County and the State of Delaware. The Town median income falls between that of the County and State despite it having lower percentage of households with wage/salary income and higher percentage of households with social security income. Mean retirement income in the Town is significantly lower than that in the County and State.

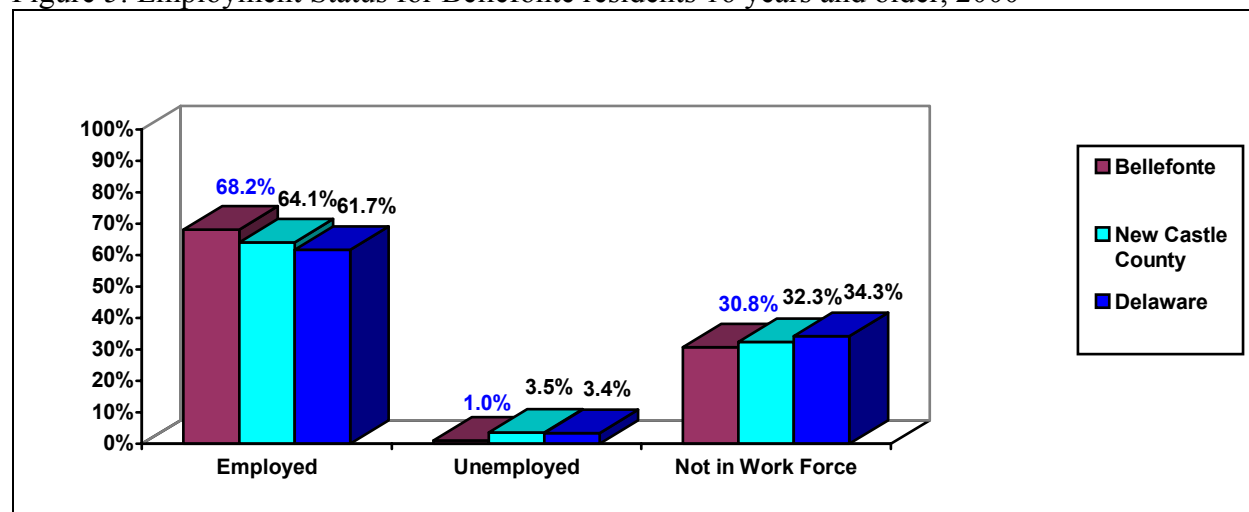
Table 9: Selected Income Data for Bellefonte, New Castle County, and Delaware, 2000

Item	Bellefonte	New Castle County	State of Delaware
Median household income	\$49,231	\$52,419	\$47,381
% of households with wage and salary income	78.7%	82.1%	79.4%
% of households with social security income	29.4%	24.2%	26.9%
Mean social security income	\$12,825	\$12,397	\$11,997
% of households w/ retirement income	20.4%	18.9%	21%
Mean retirement income	\$10,240	\$18,286	\$17,871
% of households with public assistance income	2.1%	2.4%	2.7%
Mean public assistance income	\$4,927	\$2,488	\$2,516
% of population below poverty level	4.0%	8.4%	9.2%
% of seniors (65+) below poverty level	6.7%	7.4%	7.9%

Source: Census 2000, SF-3.

Figure 5 shows the employment status for residents of Bellefonte compared to New Castle County and the State of Delaware. Bellefonte has a higher rate of employed and lower rate of unemployed and not in the work force versus both the County and State.

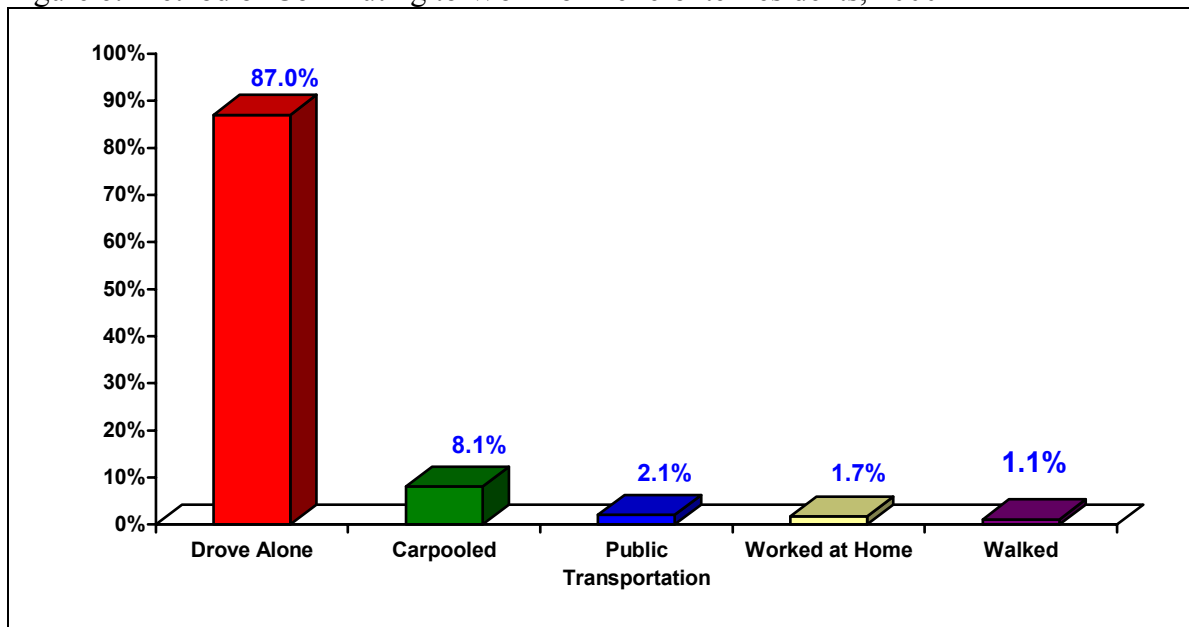
Figure 5: Employment Status for Bellefonte residents 16 years and older, 2000



Source: US Census, 2000

Figure 6 shows how the residents of Bellefonte commute to work. 87% drove to work alone, while 8.1% carpool. The mean travel time to work is about 25 minutes indicating the majority of the Bellefonte workforce are not employed in the immediate area.

Figure 6: Method of Commuting to Work for Bellefonte Residents, 2000



Source: US Census, 2000; SF-3.

Table 10 indicates that workers in Bellefonte are involved in a plethora of industries, with the finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing (14.9%) and educational, health and social services (14.6%) being the most popular. Retail trade (11.1%), manufacturing (10.5%), and construction (10.5%) represent the rest of the dominating industries.

Table 10: Industry of Workers 16 years and older

Industry	Bellefonte	New Castle County	Delaware
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	-	0.5%	1.1%
Construction	10.5%	6.1%	7.4%
Manufacturing	10.5%	13.2%	13.2%
Wholesale trade	1.5%	2.7%	2.8%
Retail trade	11.1%	10.3%	11.6%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	6.7%	4.8%	4.8%
Information	4.0%	2.0%	1.9%
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	14.9%	14.4%	11.6%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	8.6%	10.9%	9.3%
Educational, health and social services	14.6%	19.7	19.4%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	8.0%	7.3%	7.7%
Other services (except public administration)	4.5%	4.2%	4.2%
Public administration	5.2%	3.9%	5.2%

Source: US Census, 2000; SF-3.

EXISTING LAND USES

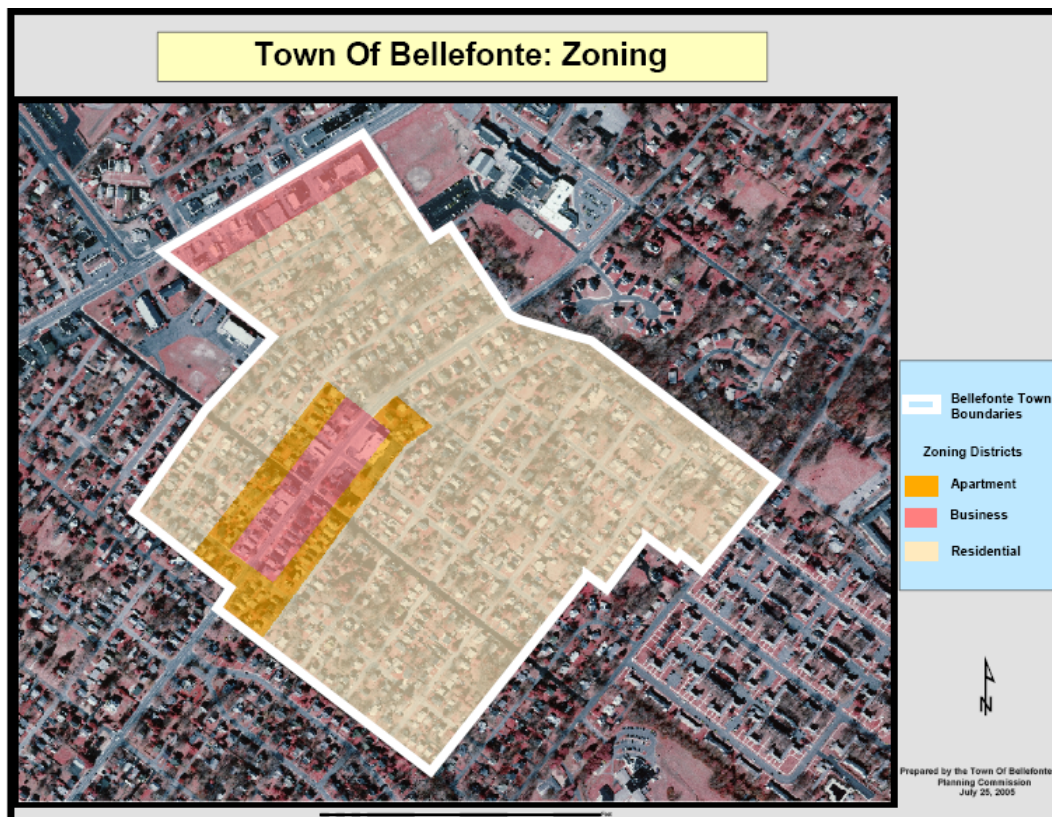
Land Use in Bellefonte

Land use within the Town of Bellefonte is primarily residential with two small commercial areas, one on Brandywine Blvd (central business district) and the second on the edge of the Town on Philadelphia Pike. The residential units in Bellefonte are primarily single family along with several two family units and a couple of apartment buildings. These apartment buildings were originally larger single family houses which have since been converted into apartments. The Brandywine Ave business district (central business district) consists of several resale and other unique shops, two restaurants, laundromat, bakery, barbershop, upholstery shop, plumbing company, church, and engineering company along with a public parking lot, several apartments, single family homes, and the Brandywine Hundred Fire Station. A small Town park exists adjacent to this district on the Town Hall property. The Philadelphia Pike business district contains a variety of businesses including two gas stations, pizza/sub shop, tattoo parlor, nail salon, electrician, van/car rental company, and others. Only a few undeveloped parcels exist in the Town. These lots are currently primarily used as yards of adjoining parcels, but could be developed in the future.

Current Zoning of Land

The Town of Bellefonte's current zoning code was originally adopted in 1947 along with a few amendments since then. A copy of this ordinance and amendments can be found on the Town website, www.townofbellefonte.com. The zones consist of residential, apartment, and business.

Map 3: Town of Bellefonte Zoning



Residential – The residential zone allows for single family units, two family units (only with a variance from the Board of Adjustments), home-based businesses without exterior signs or display of goods, office of a physician, clergyman, or other spiritual leader residing on the premises, and places of worship.

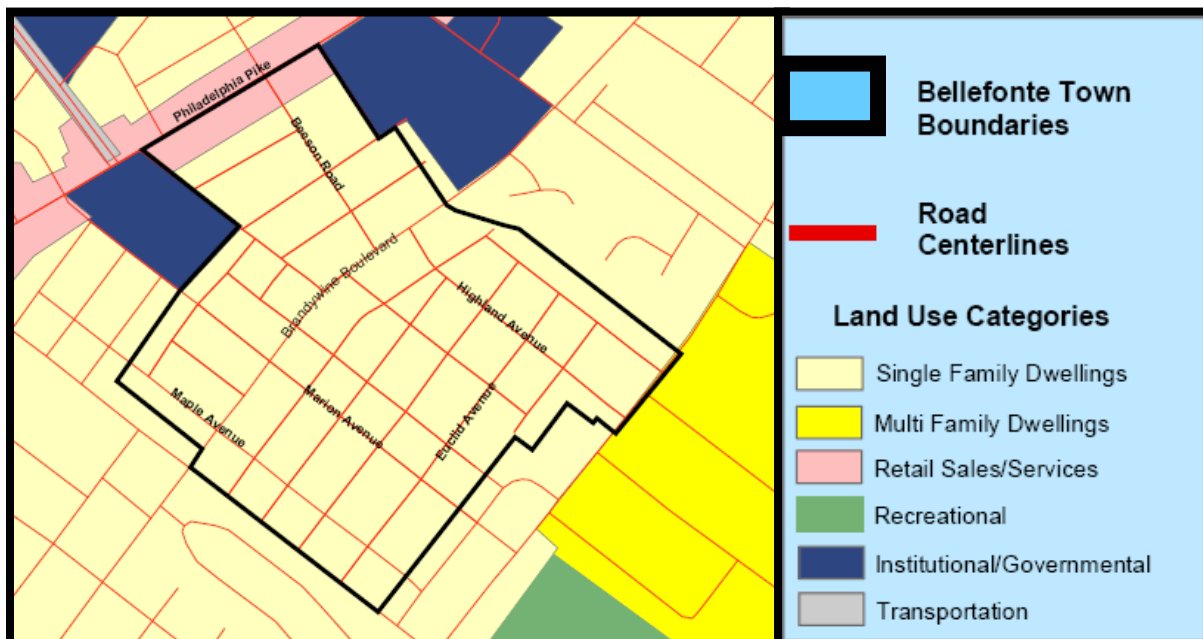
Apartment – The apartment zone allows for apartments for any number of families; apartment hotels, lodging and boarding houses not primarily for transients; dormitories and boarding schools; restaurants operated in conjunction with any of the above; lodge rooms and clubs; office of a physician or other similar profession; and single family homes.

Business – Both business districts allows any use permissible in the residential and apartment zones along with retail establishments, shop for personal services, offices, library, community center, and place of worship. Gasoline service stations, automobile agencies, public garages, liquor stores, taprooms, or any business where noxious odors, fumes, noises, or other unpleasant emissions are likely to result are prohibited in the Brandywine (central) business district unless passed by referendum and written consent is obtained from three-fourths of the property owners within 200 feet.

Land Surrounding Bellefonte

All of the land bordering Bellefonte is within unincorporated New Castle County. The adjacent lands to the town are currently residential and the areas surrounding lands lie outside the County's growth overlay zone. The surrounding area is built out-residential with the exception of the of the eastern part of the town which borders Mount Pleasant Elementary School and to the west which borders Philadelphia Pike a retail commercial site.

Map 4: Surrounding Land Uses



Housing

The Bellefonte housing stock is comprised of nearly all older houses with 90% of the houses built prior to 1950 (figure 7). The majority of housing styles are bungalow, cape code, or colonial (figure 8) and small compared to newer construction in New Castle County with an average total area of only 1,445 sq. ft. The housing is occupied mainly by single families with some multi-family occupancy (figure 9). The Bellefonte's housing stock is in good to excellent condition (figure 10) and its residential neighborhoods are stable both in terms physical condition and turnover. There are only a few remaining lots which are generally used as yards of the adjacent lot so additional building in Bellefonte is very limited. In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in the price of homes as it true in the surrounding area(s).

Figure 7: Year Bellefonte Houses Built

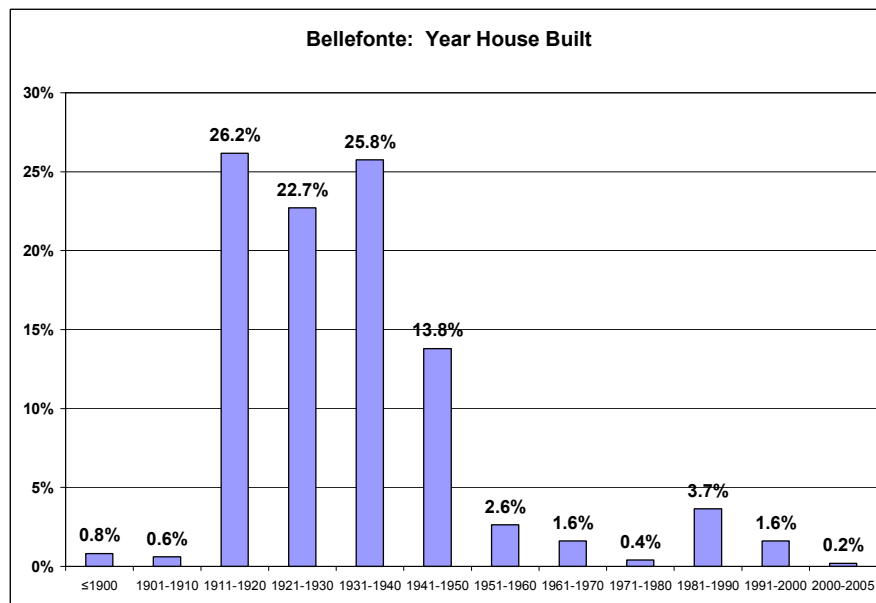


Figure 8: Bellefonte Housing Styles

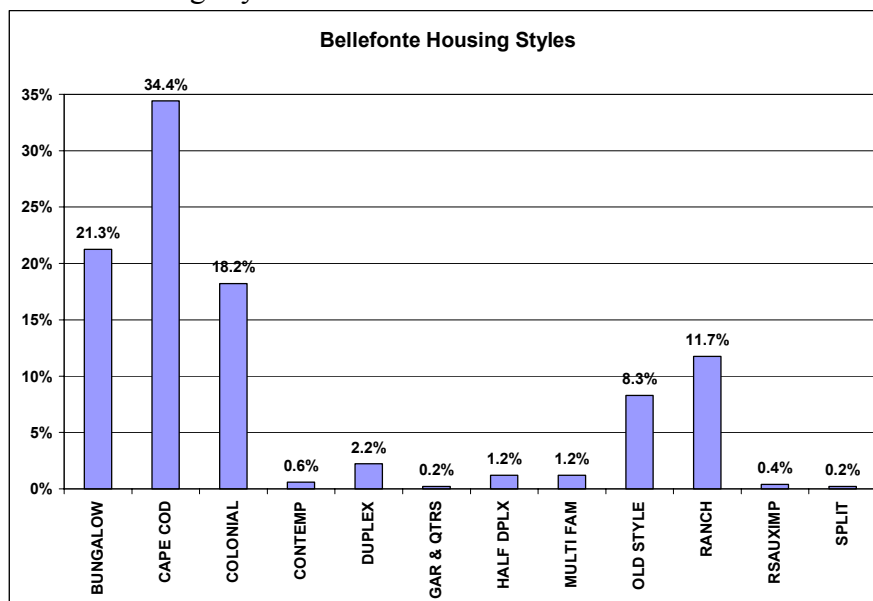


Figure 9: Bellefonte Housing Occupancy

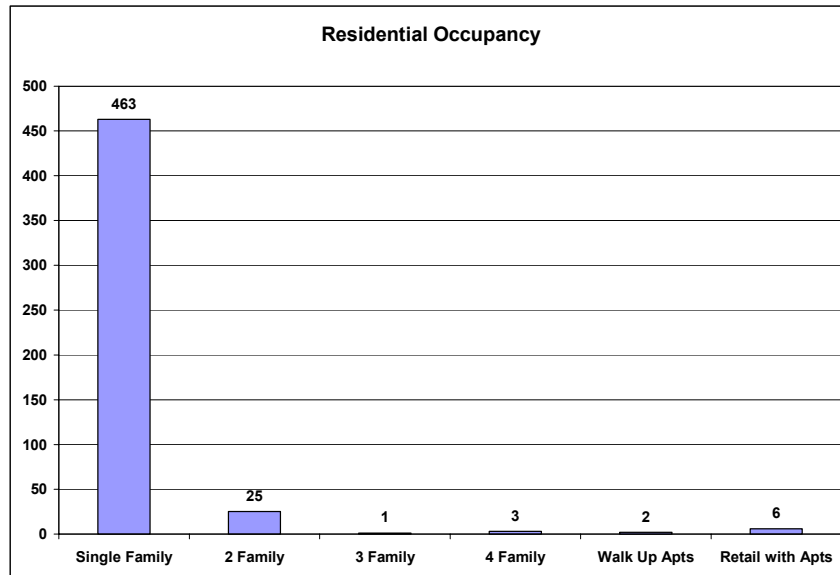
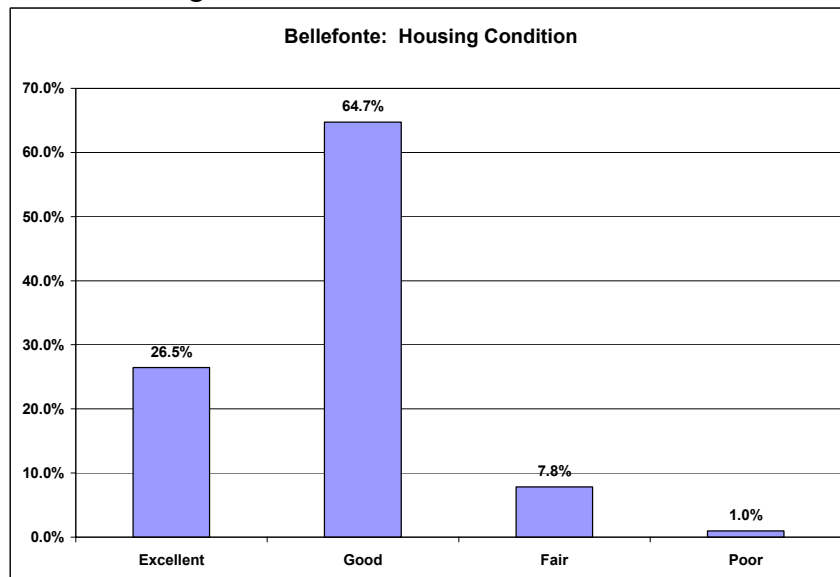


Figure 10: Bellefonte Housing Conditions



NATURAL FEATURES

Floodplains, Wetlands, and Recharge Areas

Bellefonte is not located in a floodplain, wetlands nor are there any recharge areas.

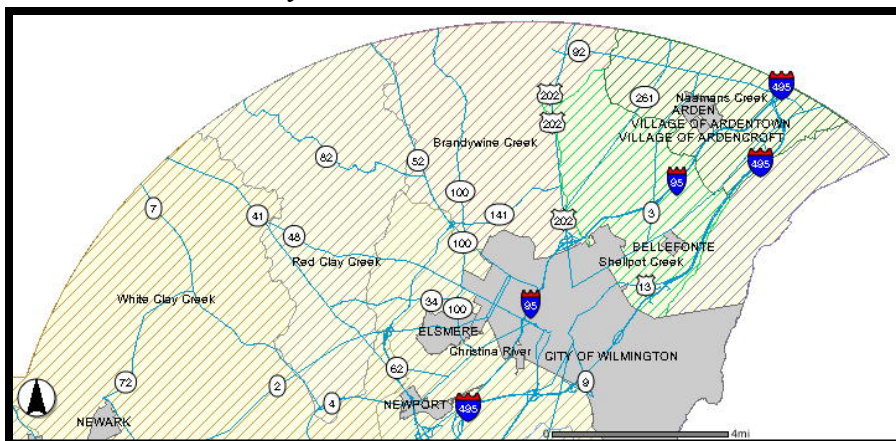
Soils

According to the 1971 *USDA-NRCS Soil Survey for New Castle County, Delaware*, the soils in Bellefonte are level to moderately sloping well drained medium-textured soils, relatively undisturbed to severely disturbed, formed over dark-colored gabbroic rocks; on uplands.

Shellpot Creek Watershed

As shown in Map 5, the Town of Bellefonte is located in the Shellpot Creek Watershed. This watershed is located north of the Christina River and east of the Brandywine River. The stream flows southeastward through piedmont region and enters Delaware River at Wilmington Cherry Island area. It drains about 9,000 acres of residential and commercial areas and has no point sources discharging nutrients and other oxygen consuming pollutants into the watershed.

Map 5: Northern New Castle County Watersheds



Water quality monitoring performed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) has shown that the Shellpot Creek is impaired by high levels of bacteria and elevated levels of the nutrients nitrogen and phosphorous, and that the designated uses are not fully supported by water quality in the stream.

Section 303(d) of the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires states to develop a list (303(d) List) of waterbodies for which existing pollution control activities are not sufficient to attain applicable water quality criteria and to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for pollutants or stressors causing the impairment. A TMDL sets a limit on the amount of a pollutant that can be discharged into a waterbody and still protect water quality. TMDLs are composed of three components, including Waste Load Allocations (WLAs) for point source discharges, Load Allocations (LAs) for nonpoint sources, and a Margin of Safety (MOS).

DNREC listed Shellpot Creek on several of the State's 303(d) Lists and proposes the following Total Maximum Daily Load regulation for nitrogen, phosphorous and Enterococcus bacteria.

- The nonpoint source nitrogen load from the area south of Business Route 13 shall be reduced by 35% (from the 2000-2003 baseline). This shall result in reducing the yearly-average total nitrogen load from 19.2 pounds per day to 12.5 pounds per day.
- The nonpoint source nitrogen load from the area north of Business Route 13 shall be capped at the 2000-2003 baseline level. This shall result in a yearly-average total nitrogen load of 89.4 pounds per day.
- The nonpoint source phosphorous load from the area south of Business Route 13 shall be reduced by 35% (from the 2000-2003 baseline). This shall result in reducing the yearly-average total phosphorous load from 2.0 pounds per day to 1.3 pound per day.
- The nonpoint source phosphorous load from the area north of Business Route 13 shall be capped at the 2000-2003 baseline level. This shall result in a yearly-average total phosphorous load of 5.7 pounds per day.
- The nonpoint source bacteria load shall be reduced by 74% from the 1998-2004 baseline level. This shall result in reducing a yearly-mean bacteria load from 3.7E+10 CFU per day to 9.0E+9 CFU per day.
- The bacteria load from Wilmington CSO 31 shall be reduced by 28% from the 1998-2004 baseline level. This shall result in reducing a yearly-mean bacteria load from 5.4E+10 CFU per day to 3.9E+10 CFU per day.
- Based upon water quality model runs and assuming implementation of reductions identified by Articles 1 through 6, DNREC has determined that, with an adequate margin of safety, water quality standards will be met in Shellpot Creek.
- Implementation of this TMDLs Regulation shall be achieved through development and implementation of a Pollution Control Strategy. The Strategy will be developed by DNREC in concert with a Shellpot Creek Tributary Action Team, other stakeholders, and the public.

Source: DNREC Proposal: Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for Shellpot Creek, Delaware

TOWN GOVERNMENT

TOWN GOVERNMENT FORMAT

The Town's charter of 1915 established the government of Town of Bellefonte, as The Commissioners of Bellefonte. A five member Town Commission governs the Town with elections held the first Tuesday of June. Commissioners must be citizens of the Town of Bellefonte and at least three must be freeholders. Each Town Commissioner is elected for a two year term with the terms of three seats expiring in the odd years and the other two seats expiring in the even years. A Treasurer, who must be a citizen and freeholder, and an Assessor are elected annually.

At the first Town meeting following the election, newly elected officials are sworn into office. The Commissioners elect one member to serve as the President, who serves as Chief Executive of the Town and another to serve as the Secretary. It is customary for each of the other Commissioners to chair various committees that are responsible for the various functions of the government and report to the full Town Commission on activities in their particular area. A tax collector is annually appointed by the Town Commission. With the exception to a small stipend paid to the Town Commissioner appointed Secretary, the Charter does not permit payment of a salary to the other Town Commissioners.

The Town Commission is responsible governing aspects of the Town including, but not limited to, passing laws in the form of ordinances, developing and administering a budget, overseeing the Treasurer and Inspectors, answering citizen complaints, intergovernmental relations, and citizen communications. The Commission currently holds its regular Town meeting on the second Monday each month and working meeting last Tuesday of month.

In 1941, the Commissioners of Bellefonte passed the "Rules and Regulations for Building and Plumbing" establishing the positions of Building Inspector and Plumbing Inspector and the Building and Plumbing regulations. The Inspectors are elected by the Town Commission for a one year term. The current Town Commission is in the process adopting a new ordinance adopting the International Code Council's requirements along with the amendments to these requirements as adopted by New Castle County. This ordinance will bring Bellefonte's building and plumbing regulations in line with the surrounding unincorporated New Castle County.

In 1947, the Commissioners of Bellefonte passed "The Building Zone Ordinance for the Town of Bellefonte, Delaware" establishing a Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustments, and the zoning regulations for the Town. The Zoning Commission will be responsible for making the recommendations to the Town Commission to update the zoning regulations to reflect the Town Comprehensive Plan. The Board of Adjustments consists of the President of the Town Commission, the Town Solicitor, and an appointee confirmed by the Commission as the Town does not have an engineer on staff. The appointee serves a two year term.

OTHER GOVERNING BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, & COMMITTEES

Planning Commission

In 2004, the Town Commission established the Town's first Planning Commission. The Commission consists of nine members serving staggered terms. The members of the Planning Commission are appointed by the Town Commissioners and are an advisory body to the Town Commissioners. Its major responsibilities are to develop, evaluate and recommend modifications of the Town's Comprehensive Development Plan. Once the Plan is adopted, members of the Planning Commission will participate on various committees along with interested citizens to formulate action plans and recommendations as it pertains to implementation of the Town's strategies. These committees will report back to the Planning Commission. Based on the information from the committees, the Planning Commission will make recommendations to the Town Commission on the implementation of the Plan to obtain the goals set forth in the Plan.

Zoning Commission

A formal Zoning Commission has not existed for years in the Town of Bellefonte. This Commission will be re-established to update the zoning regulations in accordance with the Plan when it is adopted. The Zoning Commission will consist of three members appointed by the President and confirmed by the Town Commission. Initial appointments will be for two, four, and six year terms and for six year terms thereafter. No more than two members appointed may be from the same political party. The Zoning Commission shall make preliminary reports and hold public hearings before submitting its final report to the Town Commission. The Town Commission shall not take action on zoning matters until it has received the final report.

Board of Adjustment

Currently, the Board of Adjustment consists of the President of the Town Commission, the Town Solicitor, and an appointee confirmed by the Commission as the Town does not have an engineer on staff. The appointee serves a three year term. This body has the authority under appropriate conditions to grant variances to the zoning ordinance as long as such variance is in harmony with the ordinance's general purpose and intent.

Town Services Committee

The Town Services Committee oversees safety, streets, street & traffic lights, trash collection, and recyclables collection. This committee is responsible for maintaining said services and addressing citizen complaints regarding these services. This committee provides a monthly update on recent service associated activities and makes recommendations for consideration to the Town Commission. This committee is chaired by one of the Town Commissioners with other Town Commissioners and citizens serving as members.

Town Facilities Committee

The Town Facilities Committee oversees the maintenance and improvement of Town properties such as Town Hall, Bellefonte Town Park, and the public parking lot. This committee provides a monthly update on recent Town facilities activities and makes recommendations for consideration to the Town Commission. This committee is chaired by one of the Town Commissioners with other Town Commissioners and citizens serving as members.

Charter/Ordinance Committee

The Charter/Ordinance Committee was formed in 2004 to review and update the Town Charter and all ordinances. This committee provides a monthly update on recent activities and introduces new and updated ordinances for consideration to the Town Commission. This committee is chaired by one of the Town Commissioners with other Town Commissioners and citizens serving as members.

Community Recreation & Activities Committee

The Community Recreation & Activities Committee was formed in 2004 to develop a program to foster a stronger sense of community amongst its citizens. This committee provides a monthly update on recent activities and makes recommendations for consideration to the Town Commission. This committee is chaired by one of the Town Commissioners with other Town Commissioners and citizens serving as members.

Bellefonte & Brandywine Hundred Task Force

The Town & Fire Company Task Force was formed in 2005 to improve relations between the two entities and work jointly on community concerns, events, and projects. This Task Force was originally chaired jointly by one of the Town Commissioners and the Brandywine Hundred Fire Company President with citizens serving as members. After the first meeting of the Task Force, the Board of the Brandywine Hundred Fire Company notified the Town Commission that the President of the Fire Company was too busy to participate. Since this action resulted in no Fire Company representation, the Task Force has been inactive.

Intergovernmental Communication and Cooperation

The Town Commission has been working to strengthen relationships between the Town and State, New Castle County, other municipalities, and various government agencies. The Town Commission has developed a good working relationship with our district's State Representative and New County Councilman. These State & County representatives attend our Town meetings as their schedules permit and receive the Town's newsletter to keep abreast of activities and issues in the Town. In addition, a bi-directional flow of information occurs on an as needed basis. Through the development of this plan, the Town has also developed a good relationship with the Office of State Planning & Coordination and has joined the Delaware League of Governments to increase interaction with other municipalities and learn from their experiences.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

WATER

United Water Delaware, 2000 First State Blvd, Wilmington, DE maintains the water system and provide water service. All residences and businesses are connected to a public water system. The few remaining vacant lots in Town can be connected to the same system. Residents and businesses arrange water service directly with United Water and are billed quarterly based on water consumption.

ELECTRIC

The Town of Bellefonte does not generate or deliver electricity. Electric service can be contracted directly by the resident with Delmarva Power (formerly Conectiv). Delmarva does pay the Town an annual fee based on the number of electric poles in Town.

NATURAL GAS

The Town of Bellefonte does not provide natural gas service. Natural gas service can be contracted directly by the resident with Delmarva Power (formerly Conectiv).

SEWER

The Town of Bellefonte does have a public sewer system, but it is operated and maintained by New Castle County, not the Town.

TELEPHONE

Verizon is the main provider of land-line telephone service in the Town. Several companies provide cellular service in this area.

CABLE/SATELLITE TELEVISION

Comcast is currently the only cable television provider in Town paying the Town an annual fee for a non-exclusive franchise license. Verizon has expressed interest in entering into a franchise agreement when their new fiber optic network is installed in the Town in 2006. Entering into such an agreement with Verizon will provide the residents with a choice of cable providers. Currently, a number of residences have satellite television service instead of cable.

INTERNET ACCESS

Dial-up internet access is widely available by numerous providers. Both Comcast and Verizon provide high speed internet access to the Town of Bellefonte.

TRASH COLLECTION

Trash collection is free to all residences. Up until July 31, 2005, curbside trash collection occurred twice per week on Tuesdays and Fridays. For most residences, twice a week trash collection was not really necessary. The Town Commission negotiated a contract to reduce the trash collection to once per week (Tuesday) in effort to save money and to fund a recycling program.

RECYCLING

Beginning in September 2005, the Town of Bellefonte began a voluntary curbside recycling program to help the environment by reducing the amount of trash the Town sends to the landfill. After a period of observation to determine the level of participation, the Town Commission will make a decision on whether to make curbside recycling mandatory, instead of voluntary. Recyclables are collected on the same day as the trash (Tuesday) in order to have only one day that items are placed out on the curb.

POLICE PROTECTION

Police protection in the Town of Bellefonte is provided by New Castle County Police. The Town does contract for additional law enforcement to curb speeding and other traffic violations. This arrangement works well for the Town given its small size, relatively low crime rate, and fact that County provides police protection to the surrounding neighborhood. Although the Town has no contractual agreement, State Police - Troop 1 is located on Philadelphia Pike, across from the Town of Bellefonte.

FIRE PROTECTION

Bellefonte and its residents are fortunate to have the Brandywine Hundred Volunteer Fire Company No. 1 located on Brandywine Blvd in Bellefonte's Central Business District. They provide service to the Town and surrounding areas 24/7. The entire unit is fully trained and qualified in fire, medical, and emergency management services. The fire company also hosts various community events throughout the year.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

These services are provided by New Castle County Emergency Medical Services a branch of the New Castle County Police. The EMS Section is responsible for the delivery of pre-hospital advanced life support and is available on a 24-hour basis. The paramedic units operate in a tiered-response configuration with the basic life support (BLS) ambulances of volunteer fire services and contractual ambulance services. Full-time EMS personnel are stationed at the Brandywine Hundred Fire Company No. 1 on Brandywine Blvd.

COMMUNICATION

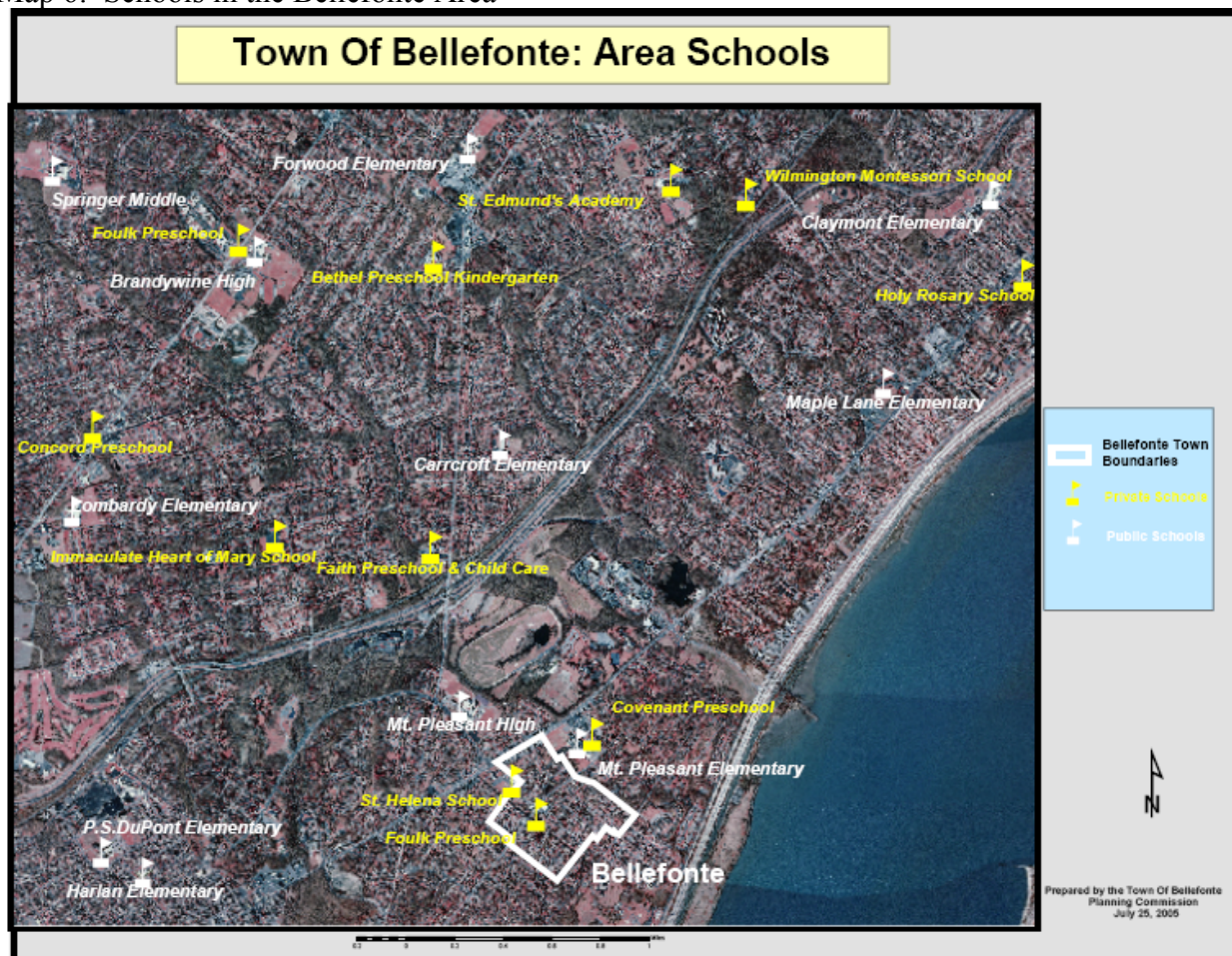
Prior to 2004, other than at the monthly meeting, the communication to the citizens of Bellefonte was spotty at best. In 2004, the Town Commission took a proactive approach to communicating with the citizens. The Commission established www.townofbellefonte.com where anyone can view minutes of the meetings, announcements, the charter, the ordinances, calendar of events, etc. Since not all residences have internet access, the Commission also established a monthly newsletter that is mailed to every residence and business in Bellefonte and to landowners that live outside of Bellefonte. This newsletter recaps the previous meetings, announces upcoming meetings or important dates, lists contact information of the Town officials, and contains short articles of special interests and tips on services, safety, etc.

SCHOOLS

The Town of Bellefonte is located in the Brandywine School District, but does not have any schools within the Town. While parents have a choice of schools, the Town is mainly served by Mount Pleasant Elementary School (K-3), Harlan Elementary School (4-6), Springer Middle School (7-8) St. Helena's School (K-8), and Mount Pleasant High School (9-12). Both of the

Mount Pleasant Schools and St. Helena's School are within walking distance. Various other schools are a short distance from the Town.

Map 6: Schools in the Bellefonte Area



PRESCHOOL/DAYCARE SERVICES

The Town of Bellefonte does not operate any preschool/daycare facilities. However, Foulk Preschool & Daycare, is located within the Town at 901B Rosedale Ave. Edgemoor Community Center, immediately adjacent to the Town at the corner of Brandywine Blvd and Duncan Rd, offers childcare services. Other nearby preschools such as Faith Preschool, Concord Preschool, and other locations of Foulk Preschool are utilized by Bellefonte parents. See Map 6 above for area preschools.

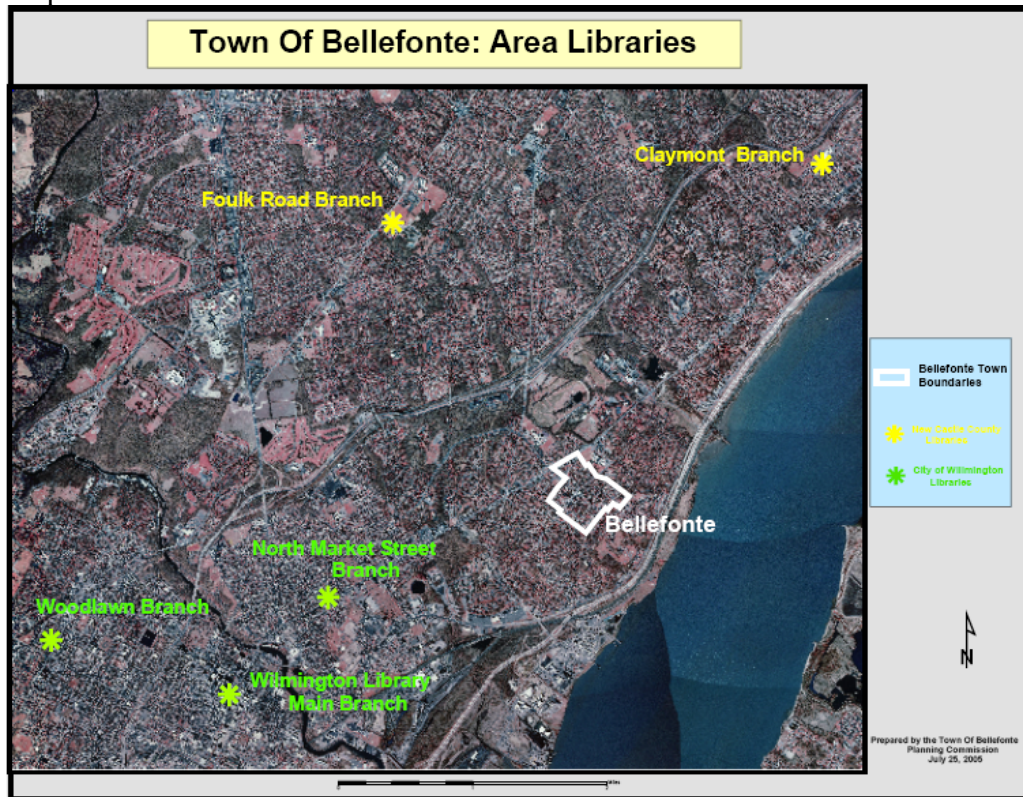
SENIOR SERVICES

Bellefonte currently provides no direct services for its senior population. However, Bellefonte seniors can obtain nutritional services including meals and education, as well as healthcare transportation through New Castle County Department of Senior Services. Senior services are also provided by a couple of nearby community centers. Sellers Senior Center, located in the Edgemoor Community Center, provides weekly programs for anyone 50 years or older. Weekly activities include bridge, pinochle, Bible study, dancing, billiards, computer training, crafts, and bingo. Trips, special events, and AARP driving courses are also available. Also nearby in the Claymont Community Center is the Brandywine Senior Center offering recreation, education, and enrichment activities as well as a daily lunch option to area residents 60 and older.

LIBRARY

The Town of Bellefonte does not have a library, but is served by two nearby New Castle County Public Libraries: Brandywine Hundred Library at 1300 Foulk Rd & Claymont Library at 3303 Green St. These libraries offer diverse programs and dynamic recreational resources that are easily accessed by the residents of Bellefonte. Additional libraries are located nearby in the City of Wilmington.

Map 7: Area Libraries



HOSPITALS/HEALTHCARE

Bellefonte does not have any hospitals or clinics. There are primarily four hospitals serving this area. Three of the hospitals, Wilmington Hospital, St. Francis Hospital, and Alfred I. duPont Children's Hospital are located a few miles away in the City of Wilmington. Christiana Hospital is located south of Wilmington in Stanton near I-95. Three Nemours Children Clinics are located near Bellefonte, one of which is just south of the Town on Philadelphia Pike. A walk-in clinic, Silverside Medical Center, is also located nearby Bellefonte on Silverside Rd.

POSTAL SERVICE

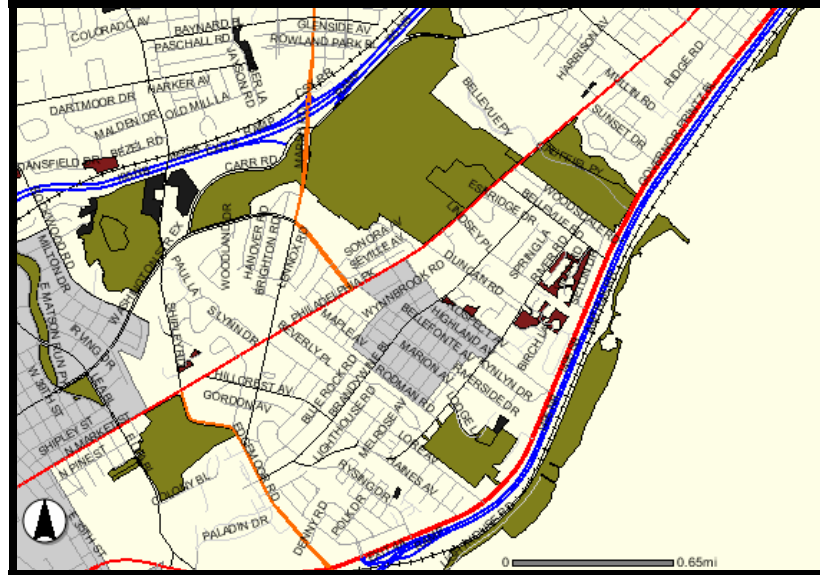
Bellefonte is served by postal facilities located in Edgemoor on Governor Printz Boulevard. Another postal facility utilized by citizens is located on Philadelphia Pike in Claymont.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The Town of Bellefonte has a small park located on the corner of Elizabeth St and Rosedale Ave. Since the park is adjacent to the private daycare center and used by its enrollees, most residents and visitors don't realize it is a public park. The park has been neglected for years and is in dire need of revitalization. New Castle County's Department of Special Services and Department of Land Use are working with the Town Commission new park design.

Immediately adjacent to Bellefonte are Bellevue State Park on Philadelphia Pike which offers numerous opportunities for recreational activities and New Castle County River Road Park on River Road. Three other nearby parks are New Castle County Rockwood Museum Park on Washington Street Extension, New Castle County Sellers Park and Fox Point State Park on Lighthouse Road.

Map 8: Nearby Parkland



TRANSPORTATION

Pedestrian

The small size of the Town makes walking an attractive mode of transportation. Through the Streetscape Program the Town was able to install brick sidewalks along Brandywine Blvd in the central business district. Unfortunately elsewhere in the Town, the narrow streets, parking on both sides of the streets, and the limited number of sidewalks results in a pedestrian unfriendly and even dangerous environment. The Town has no crosswalk markings or signs.

Bicycle

The Town of Bellefonte does not have any bike paths. Like pedestrian traffic, the narrow streets and parking on both sides of the street results in a bicycle unfriendly and dangerous situation.

Motor Vehicle

The streets of Bellefonte are basically laid out in a grid-like pattern with Brandywine Boulevard serving as the major dividing artery north and south between Edgemoor Road and Duncan Road. Marion Ave serves as the major artery east and west between Philadelphia Pike and River Road. Beeson Road receives a large amount of north/south traffic to and from the businesses located on Philadelphia Pike. Bellefonte Ave between Brandywine Blvd and Philadelphia Pike is the Town's only one-way street and serves as an emergency route to Philadelphia for the Brandywine Hundred Fire Company and Ambulance. The Town has only one traffic light located at the intersection of Brandywine Blvd and Marion Ave in middle of the central business district. Like any area, traffic is the heaviest during the morning and evening commute times. In general, accident statistics show that Bellefonte's streets are relatively safe. The Delaware

Department of Transportation is responsible for the maintenance of the 5.47 miles of streets in the Town, while Bellefonte is responsible for snow removal.

Residential Parking

Residents without a driveway and/or garage park on the street. There is ample curb space to accommodate these residents and visitors of all residents. However, the narrow streets of the Town along with parking on both sides of the street can make navigation of one vehicle difficult and passage of two opposing vehicles impossible on most streets.

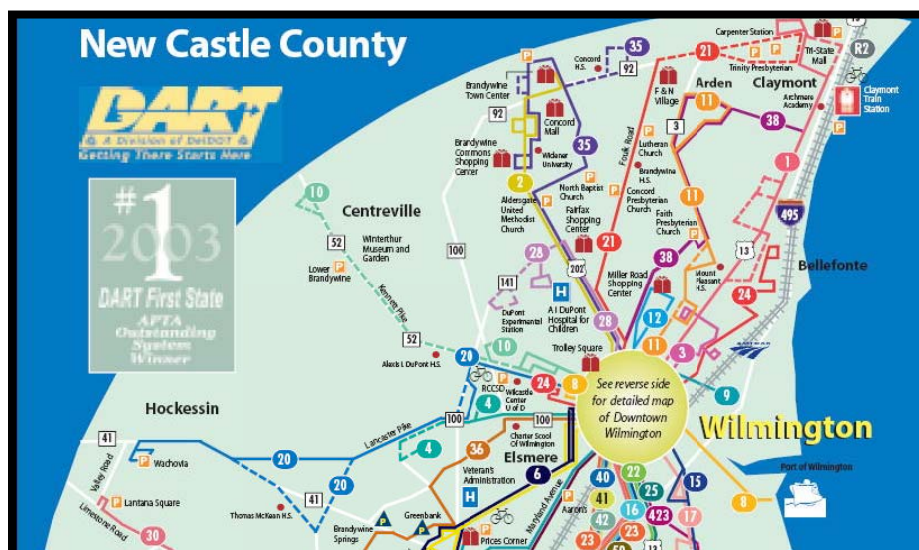
Business District Parking

Parking for patrons of the Brandywine (central) business district is primarily on Brandywine Blvd. Unlike most of the other streets, Brandywine Blvd is wide enough to accommodate parking on both sides without impeding two-way traffic. During busy times parking may overflow to the cross streets. The Town does own a small parking lot on Brandywine Blvd. This lot was previously rented to an adjacent landlord for use by his tenants. In 2005, the Town Commission terminated that arrangement to provide additional public parking for this business district. Generally, parking in the Philadelphia Pike business district is not an issue. These businesses have small private or shared parking lots. During the summer, the parking for Rita's Water Ice overflows onto Beeson near the intersection of Philadelphia Pike.

Bus Service

DART First State provides extensive service within New Castle County and to other parts of the State. Two DART bus routes make regular stops in Bellefonte. The Route 1 bus makes multiple stops on Brandywine Blvd and Philadelphia Pike. The Route 24 bus makes stops on River Road. Bus stops in Bellefonte lack cover and benches.

Map 9: DART Bus Routes

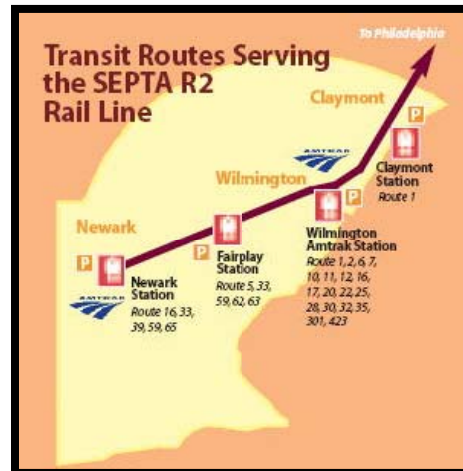


DART First State also provides paratransit service by appointment to disabled, eligible riders. Information may be obtained by contacting DART First State for eligibility information and an application.

Rail Service

There is no train service in the Town of Bellefonte. Two nearby train stations are easily accessible by DART bus service or by car. The Wilmington Amtrak Station services both Amtrak and SEPTA (regional service). SEPTA regional service is also accessible at the Claymont Station.

Map 10: SEPTA and Amtrak Stations



Air

Philadelphia International Airport is approximately 20 miles north of the Town of Bellefonte on I-95 and provides the area with commercial air travel provided by numerous carriers. Located south of Bellefonte is the New Castle Airport. This airport is operated by the Delaware River & Bay Authority offering services for mainly for private, business, charter, and cargo aircraft and is also home of the Delaware Air National Guard.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Stormwater drainage systems are designed to control the quantity, quality, timing and distribution of runoff. Other objectives in the design of stormwater management systems include erosion control and groundwater recharge. A stormwater drainage system collects surface runoff via inlets in road pavements and routes it to a treatment unit and/or receiving body of water, usually through underground pipes called storm sewers. In some cases, the surface runoff is discharged directly into a receiving body of water such as a stream, river lake or ocean. Currently, stormwater management for the Town of Bellefonte is handled by New Castle County. They maintain the water quality for local waterways. Routinely, they maintain stormwater drains and storm sewers to make sure that they are free of silt and debris so that the rainwater can flow freely.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

OVERVIEW

The Town of Bellefonte attempted to include the participation of all residences including rentals, out-of-town property owners, and business owners by distributing a survey. Out of 549 surveys mailed, 112 completed surveys were returned for a response rate of 20%. The Planning Commission considered this an excellent response given surveys, in general, have response rate of less than 5%. The Commission also considered the survey as a valid sampling of the community since it contained multiple responses from each street, had responses from homeowners, renters, landlords, and businesses, had responses spanning from new residents (<1 year) to residents living in the Town for 20+ years, and residents 18-75+ years old. Once the survey was collected and analyzed, two public workshops were held to review the results of the survey and seek further input as it related to the Comprehensive Plan. While attendance of the workshops was low, comments and suggestions from those in attendance seemed to validate the results of obtained in the survey. A complete report of the survey results can be found at www.townofbellefonte.com.

It is clear from the results below, that the character of the community is extremely important to Bellefonte residents and any changes made in the Town should be to preserve and enhance this character. Residents like the small town, main street atmosphere and uniqueness that Brandywine Blvd provides to the Town. The character of Bellefonte is the reason people moved to the Town and loss of this character is the main reason they would leave.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY & WORKSHOPS

- 84% agreed that the Town should enhance its appearance through tree plantings, flowers and other landscaping, improved signage, and façade improvements
- 76% agreed that the Town needs to establish guidelines to provide oversight and standards for building/sign/streetscape design and renovation
- 83% agreed that the Town needs promote and enhance historic preservation
- 89% agreed that the Town needs to better enforce building and zoning codes to maintain the character of the community
- While 87% patronize Bellefonte businesses, 82% would patronize more businesses if available. Many offered specific suggestions, nearly all of which characterized a business of the main street of any small town.
- When asked what they like about Brandywine Blvd (central business district), the number one response (65%) related to the small town look and feel
- The number one dislike about Brandywine Blvd was categorized as traffic (speeding, parking, congestion, etc.) followed by conditions of homes and businesses (vacant shops and shabby appearance)
- People like the convenience and variety of business in the Philadelphia Pike business district, but again dislike the traffic related issues

- While 85% felt they had adequate day to day shopping and services convenient to house, many indicated that it would be nice to have a bookstore, additional/different restaurants, deli, video store, and grocery store closer to their home
- Most mentioned types of shops and services that were appropriate for Brandywine Blvd were bookstore, restaurant, deli/produce, arts & culture, and bed & breakfast
- 62% feel current police protection adequately meets the needs of the Town
- 98% feel current fire protection adequately meets the needs of the Town
- 75% feel current effectiveness of the Town government adequately meets the needs of the Town
- 97% feel trash collection adequately meets the needs of the Town (at the time of the survey trash collection was twice per week with no recyclable collection)
- 79% feel current snow removal adequately meets the needs of the Town
- 51% believe new services or improvements to existing services should be provided. In order of mentioned most often were trash/recycling, code enforcement, leaf removal, beautification, police protection, sidewalks/curbs/streets, snow removal, and fire siren elimination.
- While most were not sure what additional types of municipal, social, or educational facilities should be in Bellefonte or that no additional facilities were necessary, others mentioned a library, child/teen center, senior/community center, educational classes, post office with Bellefonte's own zip code, park/recreation, museum, and health club/gym
- 86% believe additional efforts should be made to protect natural resources naming such things as air, open space, water, trees, community, and recycling
- The top five most dangerous streets in Bellefonte are Beeson Rd, Marion Ave, Brandywine Blvd, Philadelphia Pike, and Bellefonte Ave. Speeding, parking, and pedestrian traffic were cited as concerns on almost all of the streets along with wrong way traffic on Bellefonte Ave and the intersection of Philadelphia Pike and Beeson Rd.
- 67% indicated a problem with at least one intersection. The five most mentioned were Philadelphia Pike/Beeson, Brandywine/Marion, Brandywine/Elizabeth, Marion/Fairview, Brandywine/Beeson. Most of the problems were obstruction of view due to trees/shrubs or parked vehicles, need for stop signs/light, poor navigation due to parking, obstructed stop signs, or stop signs being ignored.
- 61% indicated the Town should improve pedestrian safety by installing more sidewalks/crosswalks, especially on Marion and Beeson, reducing speeding, and improving parking conditions
- 57% indicated that property maintenance was the most important housing problem. Other problems such availability of various housing types, cost of housing, and property taxes all had 6% or less response rate.
- 98% indicated that the quality of life is good in Bellefonte, but could be improved by better code enforcement, better sidewalks/streets, maintaining small town atmosphere, noise reduction from fire station, better police enforcement, not changing anything, and new businesses
- 49% thought sections of the Town were changing or in transition with most mentioning either decline or improvement in property maintenance
- Most people chose to live in Bellefonte because of its small town atmosphere and neighborhood character

-
- Excluding employment or health reasons, the top factors that would cause residents to leave were loss of community character (59%), public safety (55%), overdevelopment (49%), and high taxes (25%).
 - The top five areas in order of importance that should be given special attention in the plan were neighborhood preservation, protection of historic buildings/sites, enhancement of central business district, traffic/parking, and natural resource protection

STRATEGIC PLAN

GOVERNMENT

A common concern of the Town Commission and citizens is the modernization of the Town's charter, ordinances, and establishment of written policies and procedures. These documents are sorely out-of-date and have been amended piecemeal for many years. The condition of these documents makes operation of the government difficult today. While updating of these documents has been discussed by many of the previous Commissions, action only began recently with the formation of the Charter/Ordinance Committee at the end of 2004 to begin this process.

Goal #1: Modernization the Town of Bellefonte Charter

Background

The Town of Bellefonte charter has not been updated in many years and no longer reflects operation of a modern-day municipal government. The charter needs complete overhaul which is impossible with mere amendments. The review of the charter should eliminate outdated practices and language and add contents necessary for the operation of a modern-day municipality. The Charter/Ordinance Committee will have responsibility of updating the Town charter.

Strategies

1. Identify outdated practices/elements and eliminate or update
2. Identify missing practices/elements to be added
3. Encourage public participation
4. Review and final approval by Town Commission
5. Submission to State Representative for introduction and adoption by the State Legislature

Goal #2: Modernization the Town of Bellefonte ordinances

Background

The process of updating the ordinances began with the formation of the Charter/Ordinance Committee at the end of 2004. This Committee reviewed all existing ordinances and determined that all the ordinances either needed to be updated or repealed. All antiquated ordinances have been repealed by ordinance through the Town Commission. The remaining ordinances have been updated or are in the process of being updated.

Strategies

1. Develop an official procedure for periodic review and update of ordinances
2. Update remaining current ordinances
3. Identify and write new ordinances necessary

Goal #3: Provide strict code enforcement

Background

Strict enforcement of the Town's ordinances has been lacking in the past. 89% of the respondents of the survey indicated that Town needs better enforcement of its ordinances. Much of the lack of enforcement was due to antiquated ordinances that were difficult to enforce and lack of education of the regulations. To address these issues, the Town has been updating ordinances and posts all current ordinances on the Town website with an easy to understand explanation of the new ordinance in the newsletter. With the updating of the ordinances, the Town needs to establish strict enforcement. Realizing this was going to be difficult with property maintenance issues and the current Town government infrastructure, the Town worked with New Castle County to transfer property maintenance enforcement to the County's Department of Land Use. The Town still maintains control of building, plumbing, and zoning enforcement.

Strategies

1. Develop an easy to understand guide to the ordinances
2. Continue to make ordinances accessible on the Town website
3. Use periodic articles in the newsletter to educate the residents
4. Ensure the inspectors fully understand the ordinances and provide strict enforcement
5. Utilize the Charter/Ordinance Committee for clarification of ordinances when necessary

Goal #4: Establish official government operation manual of written policies and procedures

Background

In the past, policies and procedures were captured in the meeting minutes but never consolidated into a formal policy and procedure manual. This practice makes it difficult for new Commissions to operate consistently. While it is important to capture passage of policies and procedures in the minutes, these policies and procedures must be compiled into one government operation manual for reference and consistent operation of the current and future Commissions.

Strategies

1. Establish a committee review current policies and procedures
2. Develop an official procedure for creation and adoption of policies and procedures
3. Develop a governmental operation manual and periodic review
4. Identify current policies and procedures to be included in the manual
5. Identify other policies and procedures that should be created and included in the manual

Goal #5: Maintain size of Town government to meet the operational needs of the Town and its citizens

Background

A town the size of Bellefonte along with the services currently provided does not need a large government operation. Consequently, to minimize costs, the size government should be kept to minimum. As new services are added or future needs of the citizens occur, the Town Commission needs to re-evaluate the government infrastructure to ensure the proper resources are available.

Strategies

1. Develop an official procedure for periodic review of services and associated resources necessary for those services
2. For new services or operational needs, an analysis of necessary resources must be included in the proposal
3. Addition of resources to the Town government should only be done when absolutely necessary to cover services and operational needs of the Town

Goal #6: Establish Planning Commission subcommittees to make recommendations on implementation of strategic elements of the Town Plan and oversee approved recommendations

Background

As authors of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission has a great deal of knowledge of the needs of the citizens and Town and of the strategic plan to address these needs. Consequently, the Planning Commissioners are in the best position to chair subcommittees established to make recommendations on implementation of the strategic elements of the plan as well as oversight of approved recommendations.

Strategies

1. Establish subcommittees of the Planning Commission to address the strategic elements of the Town Plan
2. Subcommittees should be chaired by a Planning Commissioner
3. Subcommittees should have 3-5 members and comprised primarily of citizens not holding an position on the Town or Planning Commissions when possible based on number of volunteers available
4. Subcommittees will develop recommendations to the Planning Commission
5. Planning Commission will consideration recommendations an approve as submitted or send the recommendation back to subcommittee for additional information or revisions
6. Recommendations approved by the Planning Commission will be submitted to the Town Commission for consideration and approval
7. Implementation of recommendations approved by the Town Commission will be oversee by the appropriate subcommittee with periodic updates to the Planning Commission and the Town Commission

Goal #7: Maintain or improve communication with the citizens

Background

Historically, communication with the citizens was accomplished through attending Town meetings or requesting a copy of the meeting minutes. The Town Commission in 2004 established a monthly newsletter which summarizes the monthly Town meeting and educates citizens on ordinances, upcoming community events, contact information, and other Town related topics. This newsletter is mailed to each residence and business in Bellefonte and to landlords living outside of the Town. In addition, the Commission established and maintains a Town website, www.townofbellefonte.com, which includes the charter, ordinances, meeting minutes, newsletters, announcements, meetings/events calendar, contact information, and more. The increased communication to the citizen has led to increased interest in the Town and its operation and more citizen involvement.

Strategies

1. Continue the monthly newsletter and explore ways to improve
2. Continue the Town website and explore ways to expand its content and functionality

Goal #8: Encourage more citizen participation in Town meetings, committees, and community events

Background

Historically, participation in Town government has been low. The recent increased awareness of the Town's operations through the newsletter and website has resulted in renewed interest and participation. While pleased with the increase, the Town Commission and Planning Commission would like to encourage more participation by the citizens.

Strategies

1. Explore ways to increase attendance at Town meetings
2. Explore ways to increase active participation in committees
3. Explore ways to increase attendance at community events

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police protection for the Town of Bellefonte is provided by New Castle County Police. The small size of the Town's tax base makes the support of a Bellefonte police force financially infeasible without a tax increase of at least three-fold. Given its small geographical size, relatively low crime rate, and the availability of New Castle County Police patrolling the areas surrounding the Town, the expense of a town police force at this time is unjustifiable. Irregardless of the low crime rate, public safety is a major concern of the residents, as the loss of public safety was identified as the number two reason people would move from the Town right behind loss of community character. While the Town is not void of criminal activity, the most pressing current public safety concerns seem to stem from traffic issues, specifically speeding and visibility at intersections.

Goal #1: Traffic calming

Background

Speeding was mentioned over and over again in the surveys as a safety concern for both vehicular and non-vehicular traffic. The current Town Commission has contracted with New Castle County Police for additional traffic enforcement by off-duty officers. While effective when the officer is present, the Town cannot afford this service 24 hours per day. While speeding is a major concern, the use of speed humps has been met with opposition. Of the nine streets where speed humps were proposed, only two streets had the DelDOT required support of 67% needed to permit installation. Even though the results of the DelDot vote were released in March, installation of the speed humps on the two resident approved streets is still pending.

Strategies

1. Explore more resident-acceptable means of traffic calming
2. Explore the financial feasibility of additional traffic enforcement shifts
3. Work with New Castle County Police on the possibility of increased on-duty officer patrols through the Town
4. Work with State Police Troop 1 on the possibility of increased police presence by more frequent use of Town streets to return to their station on Philadelphia Pike

Goal #2: Improve parking and traffic flow

Background

With the exception of a couple of streets, the width of the streets cannot accommodate parking on both sides of the streets while maintaining a bi-directional flow of traffic. This situation also poses a problem with snowplowing during the winter months. Other than parking a certain distance away from an intersection and no parking on the one-way section of Bellefonte Ave (emergency route), there are no other parking restrictions in the Town. Even though parking too close to intersections is illegal, it is often ignored causing visibility and navigation difficulties. Double parking in front of the laundromat and parking situations during drop-off and pick-up times at the daycare center were specifically cited as problems by survey respondents.

Strategies

1. Explore possible solutions to the issues caused by parking on narrow streets
2. Repaint the curb no parking zone markings at intersections
3. Explore with DelDOT installation of “No Parking Here to Intersection” signs
4. Explore the possibility of loading zones for the laundromat and daycare to minimize parking issues
5. Discuss New Castle County Police stepped up parking enforcement with on both the regular and contracted patrols

Goal #3: Intersection improvement

Background

In the survey, 67% of respondents identified at least one intersection in the Town that they considered dangerous. Most of the problems were obstruction of visibility due to trees/shrubs or parked vehicles, poor navigation due to parked vehicles, stop signs being ignored, or the need for a stop sign or traffic light. The most dangerous of all the intersections named was Philadelphia Pike and Beeson Road. There is a considerable amount of vehicular and non-vehicular traffic due to the businesses, specifically Wawa & Rita’s Water Ice, trying to negotiate the cross traffic on the four lanes of Philadelphia Pike. The Town Commission has submitted a list of traffic improvement requests to DelDOT for consideration.

Strategies

1. Submit a list of intersections with visibility problems due to trees/shrubs to New Castle County Code Enforcement as this is a property maintenance issue now under their control
2. Ensure progress on Goal #2 in regards to parking near intersections
3. Discuss New Castle County Police stepped up stop sign enforcement with on both the regular and contracted patrols
4. Continue working with DelDOT to on the list of suggested traffic improvements
5. Solicit support of our County Councilman, State Representative, and State Senator for installation of a traffic light at Philadelphia Pike and Beeson Road

Goal #4: Monitor and prevent criminal activity

Background

The crime rate in the Town of Bellefonte is relatively low when compared to other communities, but is still a concern of the residents as 38% felt the Town’s police protection was not adequate and 55% identified lack of public safety as a reason they would move from the Town. At one time, the Town did have a Neighborhood Watch Program but was discontinued due to lack of participation. As mentioned previously, the Town does contract off-duty officers from New Castle County Police for extra patrols but their focus has been mainly concentrated to areas of high incidence of traffic violations. The Town Commission has been

printing crime prevention tips in the newsletter and encouraging residents to report any suspicious activity to the police. New Castle Police does not have a community liaison officer attend our Town meetings to discuss recent crime activity or prevention.

Strategies

1. Work with New Castle County Police to have a community liaison officer attend the Town meetings on a periodic basis
2. Explore the revival of the Neighborhood Watch Program
3. Work with New Castle County Police on the possibility of increased on-duty officer patrols through the Town
4. Explore the possibility of expanded the roles of the contracted police patrols to include patrolling the other streets in Town to increase visibility of police presence throughout the Town
5. Work with State Police Troop 1 on the possibility of increased police presence by more frequent use of Town streets to return to their station on Philadelphia Pike
6. Continue to remind residents of crime prevention tips in the newsletter and explore expanding it to the Town website
7. Work with New Castle County Police to obtain crime data on a regular basis as a way to monitor criminal activity to determine when additional measures must be taken

ANNEXATION

Annexation of adjacent areas of a municipality is often used to control nearby development, secure open space, smooth the town's boundaries, and increase the tax base. While in theory these seem to benefit the municipality, these benefits do come with additional responsibilities such as increased services and associated expenses as well as diminished small town character. All aspects of annexation must be scrutinized to determine the overall impact to a town.

While annexation of adjacent lands is not an immediate concern of the Town of Bellefonte at this time, it may as changes occur and opportunities arise. The adjacent surrounding land is fully developed and zoned as residential, with the exception of Philadelphia Pike which is commercial so the opportunity to secure open space and development is limited. The Town does have the opportunity to correct some irregularities in its boundary. In the future, there may also be the need to consider annexation of neighboring subdivisions as means to increase the tax base and/or control the conditions and character of those areas. While supplying services to these annexed areas should not be an issue, the Town must consider the effects of any annexation to the small town character of Bellefonte and should not annex any lands that would negatively affect this character which is very important to its residents.

Goal #1: Establish an annexation procedure with specific annexation criteria.

Background

The Town of Bellefonte currently does not have any annexation procedure with specific annexation criteria. This procedure is necessary to ensure proposed annexation does not have a negative impact to the Town.

Strategies

1. Annexations should not negatively affect the character of the Town
2. Annexations should not be considered for the sole purpose of growing the geographical size of the Town instead should only be considered to adjust irregularities in a boundary, strengthen the Town's tax base, or control an adjacent area of concern where conditions in that area could negatively affect the Town
3. Annexations should have a financial impact study and should be revenue neutral or positive
4. All annexations should require a recommendation from the Planning Commission to ensure the annexation is in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan
5. Procedure must be in accordance with the Town Charter and Delaware Code

Goal #2: Explore annexation of a limited number of properties to smooth the Town's boundary extending it up to the Mount Pleasant Elementary School & Edgemoor Community Center property lines and identify other areas where boundary rationalization may be necessary.

Background

Four properties (three at the end of dead-end streets and one on Brandywine Blvd) shared property lines with Mount Pleasant Elementary School and/or Edgemoor Community Center properties. All of these properties are considered New Castle County, not Bellefonte. These properties are often confused by the Town's contracted service providers as part of Bellefonte. With the exception of one, the only access to these properties is through the Town of Bellefonte. In the winter, all of properties enjoy the benefit of snow removal at the Town's expense. Bellefonte has other boundary irregularities that should be explored as necessary in the future.

Strategies

1. Determine the willingness of the four property owners to be annexed
 - 1214 Wynnbrook Rd
 - 1214 Talley Rd
 - 1215 Talley Rd
 - 1215 Brandywine Blvd
2. Verify the annexation meets the criteria for annexation
3. Implement the necessary steps of the Annexation Procedure
4. Explore boundary areas of concern and identify areas where annexation may be necessary for boundary rationalization

Goal #3: Monitor adjacent areas of concern to determine if action is necessary.

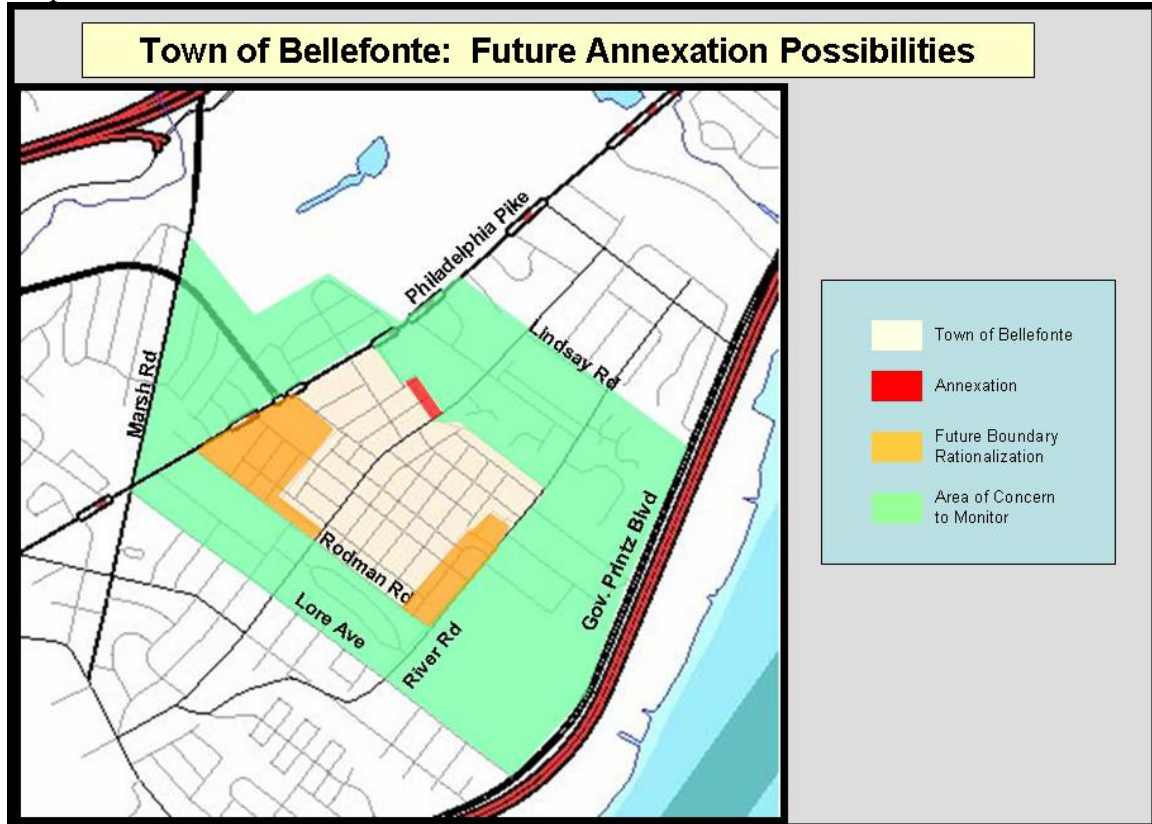
Background

The Town of Bellefonte no physical buffer distinguishing it from the surrounding fully developed areas of New Castle County. Changes in these adjacent areas of concern could have a negative impact on the Town. The Town must monitor these areas for such negative changes and work with the County to prevent a negative impact or if necessary take control of the affected area by annexation.

Strategies

1. Monitor areas of concern for changes that could potentially affect the Town
2. Work with New Castle County to prevent an impact to the Town
3. Last resort, explore annexation to take control of the area

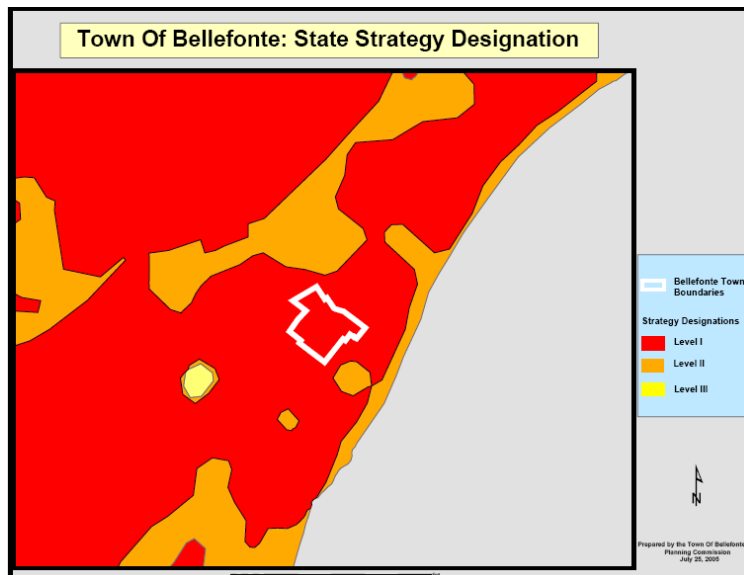
Map 11: Bellefonte Future Annexation Possibilities



REDEVELOPMENT

The State Strategies for Policies and Spending Update 2004 has identified Bellefonte and most of the adjacent area as Investment Level I. True to the characteristics of a Level I area, Bellefonte has a central business district surrounding by a variety of housing. While at a smaller scale than larger towns and cities, the Town offers an array of public institutions, services, and amenities. The institutions, such as schools, hospitals, etc, not located directly in the Town can be found in adjacent areas. Significant investment already exists in roads, water and sewer systems, and commercial and residential buildings. As a Level I area, the State investment strategy is to provide for continued health and vitality through reinvestment and redevelopment, foster efficient use of existing public and private investments, and enhance community identity and integrity.

Map 12: Bellefonte State of Delaware Strategy Designation



Goal #1: Monitor and improve streets

Background

The streets of the Town of Bellefonte are maintained by DelDOT. Immediate repair needs for conditions such as potholes are reported to the Town Commissioner in charge of Town Services who in turns reports the problem to DelDOT for repair. Projects such as repaving are overseen by DelDOT, but funded by the Community Transportation Funds controlled by the State Senator and Representative.

Strategies

1. Establish an annual inspection process of streets to document current condition, prioritize streets based on condition, and estimate when repaving would be necessary
2. Work with State Senator and Representative to secure funding for repaving
3. Identify other street improvement projects

Goal #2: Maintain and improve sanitary and storm water sewer system

Background

The sanitary and storm water sewer systems in the Town of Bellefonte are maintained by New Castle County. The Town needs to establish more proactive communication with the County as to the condition of the systems and needs for repair and future replacement if necessary.

Strategies

1. Establish a periodic communication plan with New Castle County on the conditions of the sewer systems
2. Participate in meetings involving the Town sewer systems

Other redevelopment goals are outlined in the transportation, housing, community character & design, parks & recreation sections of this Strategic Plan.

LAND USE

Bellefonte is considered “built out” and future land use within the Town will be related to rehabilitation activities of current structures with the exception of a few small building lots that may be able to accommodate a single structure. There are no large tracts of open land that would be suitable for future residential/commercial development. While the Town does have a current zoning ordinance, the regulations were previously not strictly enforced and/or grandfathered properties or variances to the regulations not accurately documented. One of the principal objectives of this planning process is provide the necessary direction to update this code and establish the necessary infrastructure to ensure proper enforcement.

Goal #1: Update the Town’s zoning ordinance by end of 2006

Background

The Town’s current zoning ordinance was originally passed in April, 1947. While it has undergone some amendments, the ordinance is in need of modernization and also will need to be revised in order to reflect changes as a result of the development of this plan. An actual Zoning Commission has not existed for years. The first step will need to be re-establishing this commission to take responsibility for revision of the zoning regulations. As part of the revision, the Commission will need to explore changing the composition of the Board Adjustments from the current composition of the President, Solicitor, and an appointee since the Town does not have an engineer.

Strategies

1. Re-establishment of the Zoning Commission
2. Update current ordinance to align it with this plan, State code, and when possible New Castle County
3. Develop a clear zoning permit process to be included in the ordinance
4. Explore changing the composition of the Board of Adjustments to a five member board of residents pursuant with §322(b) of Delaware State Code instead of the current three member board of §322(a)
5. Obtain public input through public hearings
6. Adopt new zoning ordinance within 18 months of adoption of this plan

Goal #2: Develop zoning education program for residents

Background

Many of the residents are not aware of the zoning regulations or chose to ignore them because of lack of enforcement in the past. Better education of the residents on the zoning regulations is essential.

Strategies

1. Develop an easy to understand guide to the zoning regulations
2. Educate citizens on why zoning is necessary to maintain the community
3. Educate citizens on the updated zoning requirements
4. Educate citizens on the zoning permit process

Goal #3: Identification and registration of non-conforming properties

Background

In surveying the Town, there are several properties that are non-conforming with the current zoning ordinance. Most of the non-conformity is single family homes turned into apartments outside of the current apartment zone. The current Town Commission has searched the records and cannot find a record of properties that were either grandfathered due to existence prior to adoption of the original ordinance or subsequent amendments or of variances granted by the Board of Adjustments. Since we cannot prove the situation one way or the other, the recommendation is develop an amnesty program so these situations can be properly handled and documented.

Strategies

1. Develop a program to identify non-conforming properties by offering amnesty for registration with a deadline to apply
2. Develop and maintain a better record system of non-conforming properties and variances

Goal #4: Strict zoning enforcement

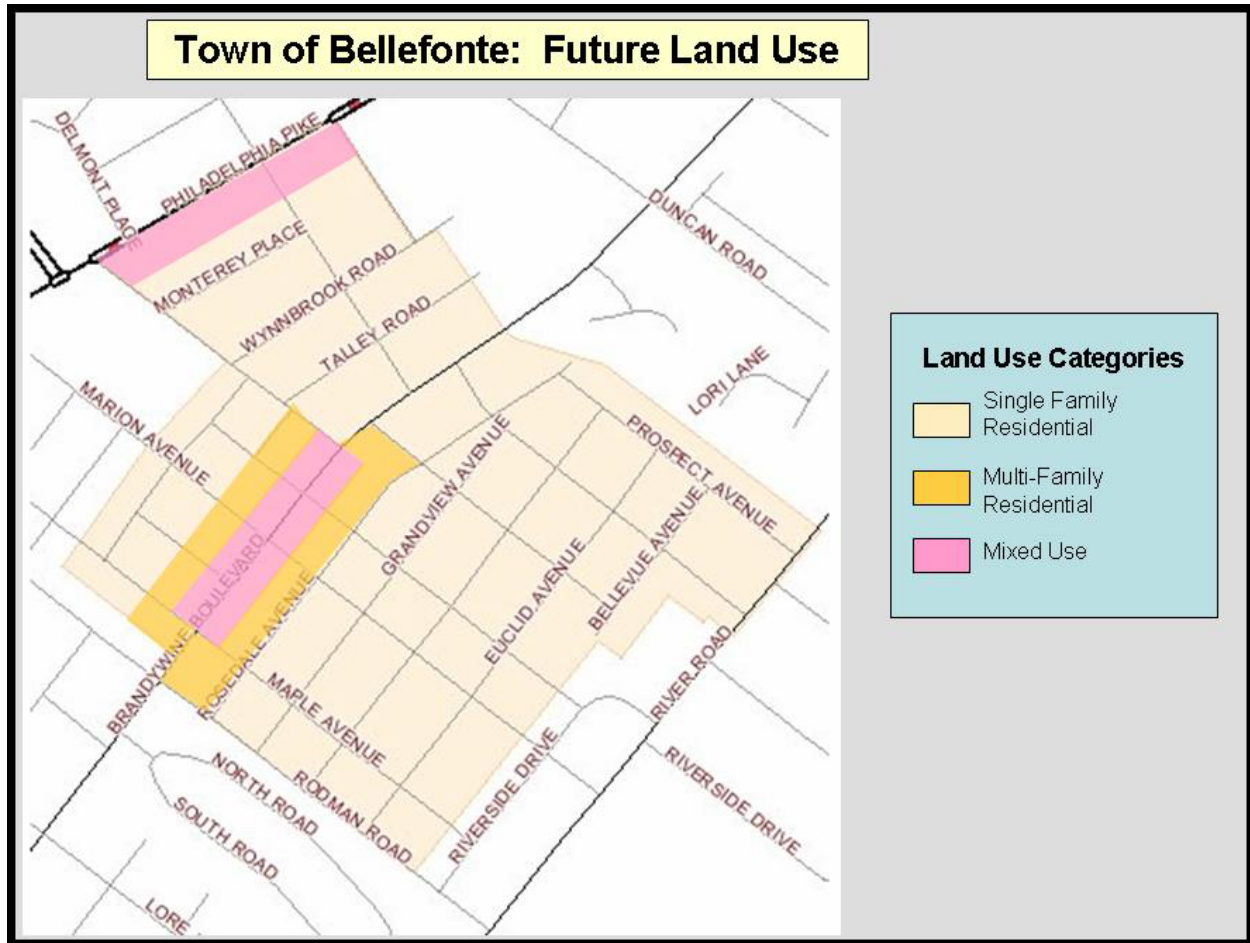
Background

Zoning has not be strictly enforcement in past. This situation is due in most part to lack of familiarity of the regulations and permit process by both the residents and inspectors. As dictated by the residents responding to the survey, the Town needs to be strict on enforcement including penalties for violators.

Strategies

1. Educate the residents on the regulations & permit process
2. Ensure the inspector is update to date on the regulations
3. Utilize the Zoning Commission for clarification of the regulations
4. Ensure the inspector is strictly enforcing the regulations including penalties for violators

Map 13: Bellefonte Future Land Use



TRANSPORTATION

The main form of transportation in the Town of Bellefonte is personal motor vehicles. DART First State does provide bus service to the Town; however, it is underutilized. 87% of the residents commute to work alone compared to only 2% that use public transportation. The Town has mostly narrow streets that cannot accommodate two-traffic when vehicles are parked on both sides of the street. The Town has only a couple of streets with sidewalks forcing pedestrians to walk in the street.

Goal #1: Improve the availability and safety of non-vehicular transportation

Background

The Town of Bellefonte has a limited number of sidewalks and clearly marked crosswalks. The Town has no bicycle or greenway paths. This situation forces pedestrians and bicyclists to share the very narrow streets with vehicular traffic. The safety of these modes of transportation, especially children walking in the street to school, is major concern of the citizens and the Town and Planning Commissions.

Strategies

1. Explore the feasibility, prioritization, costs, and possible sources of funding of installation of additional sidewalks
2. Explore ways to improve crosswalk safety such as improved markings, crosswalk signs, and/or yield to pedestrian regulations
3. Explore the feasibility, costs, and possible sources of funding of installation of greenway paths connecting the Town to adjacent parkland
4. Explore the feasibility, prioritization, costs, and possible sources of funding of installation of bicycle paths

Goal #2: Promote use of alternative means of transportation

Background

According to the last census, 87% of Bellefonte residents commuted to work alone while only 8% carpooled and 2% used public transportation. Use of alternative means of transportation will save residents money and be better for the environment which was a concern amongst respondents of the survey.

Strategies

1. Work with DART First State to promote public bus transportation including covered bus stops
2. Work with DART First State to promote the Rideshare Program
3. Use of the Town's website to promote alternative means of transportation and explore its use for carpool advertising for those not wishing to use the Rideshare Program
4. Explore other means of transportation such as a local shuttle service

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

The Town and Planning Commissions have been working to strengthen its intergovernmental relationships. The Town Commission has regular communication with its State Representative and New Castle County Councilman. The Planning Commission worked closely with Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination on the development of this plan. The Town worked with New Castle County Department of Land Use on the transfer of property maintenance enforcement to the County and with DelDOT on traffic improvements. The Town is a member of Delaware League of Governments and often consults with other small municipalities on issues and policies. The Planning Commission has also updated various agencies and associations on the development of this plan.

Goal #1: Improve communication and coordination with State agencies

Background

The Town has recently worked at establishing better relationships with various State agencies and State Representative. As the Town works toward implementation of this plan, coordination with State agencies such as DelDOT, DNREC, DEMA, Office of State Planning Coordination, etc. are even more important and need to strengthen.

Strategies

1. If not already done, identify and document the appropriate contacts in the various agencies
2. Make initial contact with those agencies that the Town is not currently engaged
3. Verify that the various agencies have the current Town of Bellefonte contact information
4. When appropriate, establish periodic meetings with the agencies to exchange information

Goal #2: Improve communication and coordination with New Castle County agencies

Background

The current Town Commission has worked at establishing better relationships with various County agencies and its County Councilman. The Town recently worked with the County on the transfer of property maintenance enforcement to the County Department of Land Use. The County Department of Special Services recently developed a new park design for the Town Park as part of our revitalization effort. The Town also works with New Castle County Police for law enforcement and contracted special patrols.

Strategies

1. If not already done, identify and document the appropriate contacts in the various agencies
2. Make initial contact with those agencies that the Town is not currently engaged

-
3. Verify that the various agencies have the current Town of Bellefonte contact information
 4. When appropriate, establish periodic meetings with the agencies to exchange information

Goal #3: Improve communication and coordination with neighboring civic associations and other municipalities of similar size

Background

While the current Town Commission has had contact with some of the neighboring associations, this contact has been limited to specific issues. The relationship between the Town and surrounding associations needs to be strengthened. The Planning Commission has provided information regarding this plan to surrounding associations.

Strategies

1. If not already done, identify and document the appropriate contacts for the surrounding associations
2. Make initial contact with those associations that the Town is not currently engaged
3. Verify that the various associations have the current Town of Bellefonte contact information
4. When appropriate, establish periodic meetings with the associations to exchange information

COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN

With its unique businesses and fire station lining its main street, Brandywine Blvd, and its close knit community of residents, Bellefonte can probably be best described as the small town in the city. The character of the Town is what gives Bellefonte its separate identity from the surrounding neighborhoods of North Wilmington. The importance of this character was reiterated throughout the survey in the responses to the majority of questions including reasons residents live in Bellefonte, reasons they would move, strict code enforcement, establishment of design guidelines, enhancement of the central business district, important areas to address in the plan, etc.

Goal #1: Maintain the small town characteristics of the Town by establishing standards for buildings, signs, & streetscape design and renovation

Background

The character of the Town of Bellefonte is extremely important to its residents and must be preserved. Its small town characteristics are a main reason people move to Bellefonte, but loss of these characteristics is also main reason people would decide to move. Some of the newer homes are out of character with the rest of the homes and look out of place. Of the survey respondents, 76% indicated that the Town needs to establish standards and oversight for the design and renovation of buildings, signs, and streetscape.

Strategies

1. Explore design standards established by other communities to create a framework to be used
2. Develop, implement, and enforce design standards specifically for the Town of Bellefonte based on current design characteristics of the Town to include new construction and renovation of all types of residences and businesses as well as signs and streetscape.

Goal #2: Maintain the small town characteristics of the Town by improving the vibrancy of the community

Background

While the Town has a few activities organized by Brandywine Hundred Fire Company and the businesses, the Town has had few community activities organized by the Town itself. Organization of social activities was mentioned numerous times by survey respondents to develop an even stronger sense of community especially since many properties have exchanged hands bringing new residents to the Town. The Town Commission hosted a winter holiday celebration in 2004 and budgeted for additional activities in the current fiscal year.

Strategies

1. Work with the fire company and businesses to partner on already established community activities
2. Develop a plan for additional regular communities activities throughout the year that can become Town traditions

-
3. Ensure the effective and timely communication of activities (see Government section)
 4. Provide a revitalized park (see Parks & Recreation section) as center point of weather permitting activities and also as a place where residents can meet and socialize anytime
 5. Provide a mobility friendly (see Transportation section) and a safe community (see Safety section) to encourage resident interaction

Goal #3: Improve the small town characteristics of the Town by improving property maintenance and encouraging pride of ownership in the Town

Background

Property maintenance was an issue that was cited by many of the survey respondents. 84% of the survey respondents agreed that the Town should enhance its appearance through tree planting, flowers, and other landscaping as well as façade improvements. Many indicated the need for better enforcement of property maintenance ordinances and other suggested creating programs to encourage and/or assist residents. While the Town had ordinances addressing property maintenance, it did not have the infrastructure to effectively enforce the ordinances. Consequently, the Town partnered with New Castle County to enforce property maintenance. This fall the Town Commission passed an ordinance adopting the County's property maintenance code and code enforcement.

Strategies

1. Identify if any specific areas are more in need of improvement than others
2. Encourage cosmetic improvements to homes and yards
3. Explore grant programs to assist residents with property maintenance
4. Explore programs assist senior residents such as a group of volunteers to help with maintenance or assistance in applying for grants for senior citizens
5. Explore the creation of contests to encourage neighborly competition

Goal #4: Maintain the small town characteristics of the Town by preserving the history and traditions of the Town

Background

Part of the character of the Town comes from its history. The protection of historic buildings or sites was second only to neighborhood preservation as areas that need special attention in the plan.

Strategies

1. Formation of a historic committee or society
2. Continued research of the Town history
3. Collection of historic artifacts & pictures
4. Create a history library
5. Create a history section on the Town website

Goal #5: Improve and preserve the integrity of the Town

Background

Even though the Town of Bellefonte was incorporated in 1915, many people in Delaware do not realize the Town exists. At the first meeting after joining the Delaware League of Local Governments and it was announced that officials from Bellefonte were in attendance, several officials from other municipalities came up afterward to find out where the Town was located because they heard of it. Many residents alluded to this lack of identity by including suggestions on the survey such as being able use Bellefonte, DE as the official postal address instead of Wilmington, DE, having our own zip code, and installing Town signs. Through the Town's State Representative and DelDOT, the Town Commission had signs installed on the two major streets adjacent to the Town directing people to the Town. The same parties are also currently working on having custom Town signs installed at the Town limits.

Strategies

1. Improve the identity of the Town by completing installation of the Town signs
2. Explore use of Bellefonte as the postal address and/or a zip code for the Town
3. Continue to improve intergovernmental coordination & communication
4. Improve awareness through Town presence or sponsorship at area events
5. Explore other means of increasing awareness and improving the Town's identity

The central business district of Brandywine Blvd is an important characteristic element of the Town and is further addressed in the Economic Development section.

HOUSING

Availability of housing was not a major concern amongst the respondents of the survey. The only way to increase housing in this built-out Town would be to raze existing buildings to make room for multi-family housing. This type of action would be against residents' wishes of neighborhood preservation. Instead, most people were more concerned about the maintenance and appearance of the houses, the size and design of the new houses recently built, and the number of rentals and vacant houses along with the condition of these properties. Consequently, the Town's strategy on housing should have more emphasis on preservation than on availability.

Goal #1: Establish regulations on rental properties

Background

It is well known that most renters tend not to maintain the rental property as well as homeowners. The same can be said about many landlords. Bellefonte has the full spectrum of renters and landlords. Bellefonte currently does not have any rental regulations being enforced.

Strategies

1. Require registration of rental properties
2. Require periodic inspections of housing to ensure safety of the tenant
3. Encourage the reporting of property maintenance violations to New Castle County
4. Explore ways to maintain an acceptable mix of rental and resident owned properties

Goal #2: Restore & improve existing neighborhoods

See Goal #3 under Community Character & Design

Goal #3: Maintain & encourage mixed use in appropriate zones & protect existing housing choices

Background

The current Town zoning allows for mixed use in its business and apartment districts. In addition to businesses, the central business district has several single family homes and apartments. While allowed by zoning regulations, the Philadelphia Pike business district is all businesses due to the heavy traffic on the Pike. The apartment district has both apartment and single family residences; however, parking around the apartments is a concern with neighboring residents. To a limited extent, the residential district also has mixed use. Certain offices such as that of a residing physician or spiritual leader as well as home-based businesses are allowed.

Strategies

1. Preserve and encourage residential use in the business district
2. Preserve the current apartment district
3. Limit apartments to the current apartment district and the business district due to parking and rental concerns of the residents

PARKS & RECREATION

In the recent past there has been very little effort to promote recreation in the Town. Maintenance of the Town Park lapsed and newer residents do not even recognize it as a public park. Revitalization of the park and establishment of a recreational program will help address several concerns cited in the survey such as neighborhood preservation, protection of historic sites, natural resource protection, social activities, and even enhancement of the central business district as the park is adjacent to this district. A useable park and recreational activities can even reduce juvenile delinquency activities.

Goal #1: Revitalize the Town Park

Background

The Town currently has a Town Park located on the Town Hall property. Most residents thought the park was part of the adjacent daycare center, not a public park. The park has been neglected for years and is desperate need of revitalization. The current Town Commission has explored revitalization with New Castle County. While the County will not fund or do the work, the Special Services Department agreed to help the Town with the design.

Strategies

1. Design needs to be in character with the Town
2. Design needs to be accommodating to all age group
3. Design needs to incorporate passive, relaxing elements as well as recreational elements
4. Better identification and promotion of the park
5. Explore funding options
6. Develop and implement a park revitalization plan

Goal #2: Establish a recreational program

Background

The Town currently does not have any recreational programs.

Strategies

1. Explore partnerships with local community centers to promote recreational activities at their facilities
2. Develop variety of Town recreational activities targeting different age groups
3. Utilize the Town website and newsletter to promote activities

Goal #3: Explore other ways to increase recreation

Background

The current Town Park property may not be sufficient in size to accommodate all types of recreation activities.

Strategies

1. Explore purchasing of vacant lots to establish pocket parks
2. Explore establishing a greenway to connect the Town Park with adjacent area parks
3. Partner with the State and County to promote recreational activities and events at adjacent area parks to the residents

ENVIRONMENT

86% of the survey respondents believe additional efforts should be taken to protect natural resources specifically citing air quality, open space, water, trees, and recycling. Natural resource protection was in the top five areas that should be given special attention in this plan. The recently implemented recycling program is currently the only environmental program in the Town.

Goal #1: Encourage the greening of Bellefonte

Background

Trees, shrubs, plants, and flowers not only make the Town more visually appealing, they are also important to air quality and wildlife. The Town has many mature trees, but has also lost many to disease and development.

Strategies

1. Explore partnering with societies to educate residents on benefits of a greener town, most beneficial species of trees, plants, and flowers, and maintenance to prevent disease to prevent further loss
2. Explore establishment of programs to increase planting of trees, shrubs, and flowers
3. Explore and monitor current trends of tree removal restrictions in other municipalities

Goal #2: Encourage recycling to become a model community of recycling

Background

Recycling was mentioned by many survey respondents as a way to protect the environment. The Town Commission took advantage of an expiration waste disposal contract and established a request for bid that included recycling. Consequently, in September, a curbside recycling program was implemented through Delaware Solid Waste Authority (DSWA) which is available to all residents at no charge to the residents. Currently, recycling is voluntary and many residences are participating. The Town has received an award from DSWA for its establishment of its Town recycling program.

Strategies

1. Continue education on the benefits of recycling to increase participation
2. Expand the program to include recycling and/or composting of yard waste
3. Monitor participation to ensure maximum effectiveness of the program and determine if other measures, such as incentives or mandatory recycling, are necessary

Goal #3: Protect the natural resources at the County, State, and Federal levels

Background

Many environmental issues that can directly or indirectly affect the Town are debated and decided at the County, State, or Federal levels. Even though the Town has no direct control of solid waste, air & water quality, sewage, or other environmental concerns, the Town needs to work with the various agencies to protect the residents.

Strategies

1. Establish contacts and bi-directional communications with agencies establishing environmental policy
2. Monitor environmental activities to determine potential impact to the Town and its residents
3. Establish and communicate the Town's position on environmental concerns

SENIOR SERVICES

Approximately 15% of Bellefonte's population is 65 years of age or older with another 3% turning 65 in the next five years and another 4% in the following five years. The average social security income is \$12,825 which is slightly higher than the average for New Castle County and the State of Delaware; however, the average retirement income of \$10,240 is \$7,000-8,000 lower than the County & State. The Town currently does not have any senior services and does not offer a senior tax exemption.

Goal #1: Increase senior services through partnership with area senior centers and New Castle County

Background

Senior services are available at two area community centers and New Castle County. At this time, it is unknown how many Bellefonte seniors utilize these services or if they even know the services are available.

Strategies

1. Establish a partnership with the area community centers
2. Educate senior residents on services available at the centers and through the County
3. Establish a senior section on the Town website and newsletter to promote services and scheduled activities

Goal #2: Increase Town sponsored senior services

Background

The Town currently does not have any established senior services.

Strategies

1. Explore financial feasibility of granting seniors a tax exemption like New Castle County
2. Explore establishment of a senior buddy system to monitor their well-being during extreme weather conditions, emergency situations, etc.
3. Explore the establishment of a volunteer group of individual to assist senior with tasks such as minor property maintenance, errands, etc.
4. Utilize the Town website and newsletter to publish information and tips geared to seniors
5. Research and publicize County, State, and Federal assistance programs and explore a program to assist seniors with application
6. Explore a program to capitalize on the wisdom, experience, and values of the senior population to mentor the youth of the Town
7. Establish periodic senior social activities utilizing Town Hall as a gathering place

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As stated throughout this plan, the character of Town is extremely important to the residents. The businesses, especially the unique businesses on Brandywine Blvd (central business district), are an important contributor to this character. Many are small owner-operated businesses with narrow margins. Economic well-being of these businesses is essential to maintain the character of the Town and was recognized by the survey respondents as enhancement of the central business district was one of the top five areas that should receive special attention in the plan.

Goal #1: Support and promote the existing businesses

Background

Even though 87% of the survey participations stated that they patronize the Town's businesses, the businesses need to draw patrons from outside of Bellefonte in order to survive. Realizing the importance of the businesses, the Planning Commission developed a brochure promoting the Town and the Brandywine Blvd businesses that was distributed at the recent Mount Pleasant Education 175th anniversary celebration.

Strategies

1. Improve the identity and awareness of the Town (see the Improve Integrity of the Town goal in the Community Character & Design section)
2. Explore sponsorship of special activities/events
3. Expand the brochure to include Philadelphia Pike businesses and explore identify effective locations for distribution
4. Utilize the Town website & newsletter to promote businesses

Goal #2: Attract additional small business to compliment existing businesses

Background

While 85% of the survey respondents felt they had adequate day-to-day shopping and services convenient to their home, 82% of the respondents also indicated that they would patronize more Town businesses if they existed. These businesses should be in character with the rest of the Town and complement the existing businesses. Some of the businesses mentioned were a bookstore, additional restaurant, neighborhood grocery store, video rental, art & culture, health club, and hardware store.

Strategies

1. Identify the types of businesses which will be in character with the Town and complement the existing businesses
2. Explore establishing programs such as grants or tax incentives to attract business
3. Explore establishing programs such as grants or tax incentives to landlords to rent vacant buildings or a section of a building to a business
4. Monitor the need to expand the central business district and assess impact before expansion

Goal #3: Improve the appearance of the central business district

Background

While a number of survey respondents thought the central business district (Brandywine Blvd) was improving in appearance, about an equal number thought it could be improved. Everyone seemed to agree that the streetscape program of installation of brick sidewalks and new period lampposts was a great improvement to the district. Despite this improvement, a few buildings are vacant and in need of repair and others could use a façade improvement.

Strategies

1. Explore the availability of grants to improve the public areas of the district as well as the facades of the buildings
2. Explore establishing programs such as grants or tax incentives to improve buildings
3. Explore cosmetic streetscape improvements such as flags, banners, decorations, flowers, benches, etc.